THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS

CJN

SEPTEMBER 17, 2015 • 4 TISHREI, 5776 $2.00 • 56 PAGES • WWW.CJNEWS.COM

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Stepping up for Syrian refugees

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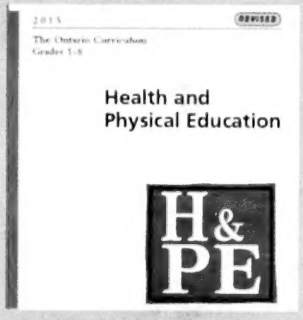

Jewish schools tackle sex ed

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Vayelech

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	7:01 p.m.	8:02 p.m.
Montreal	6:42 p.m.	7:43 p.m.
Ottawa	6:50 p.m.	7:51 p.m.
Toronto	7:04 p.m.	8:04 p.m.
Winnipeg	7:17 p.m.	8:22 p.m.
Calgary	7:25 p.m.	8:31 p.m.
Vancouver	7:01 p.m.	8:05 p.m.

Paying for praying

More and more people are finding it hard to justify expensive synagogue memberships. Is it time for Canadian congregations to rethink how they approach shul dues? **PAGE 8**

Patrilineal descent threatens unity

Simmering conflict could split the Jewish world. Is there a solution? **OPINION, PAGE 35**

What Yom Kippur does to our bodies

A nutritionist looks at how the 25-hour fast affects your organs and limbs. **PAGE 34**

Jewish stereotypes evolve on screen

Wet Hot American Summer avoids tired tropes in favour of an Israeli sexpot camp counsellor. **PAGE 43**

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We apparently still own Hollywood, and an amulet made Colbert do it

Google search blames Jews

Google says it's working to fix a bug in which users who type "Who runs Hollywood?" end up with the search result "the Jews." "This has been flagged to us, we are working to get it removed as quickly as possible," a Google spokesperson said earlier this month when the issue made headlines. But as of last week, the second result listed when entering "Who runs Hollywood" into Google was "Meet the Jews Who Own Hollywood and the Media."

BDSers smear new host over hummus

Boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) activists are angry over a mention of the partially Israeli-owned hummus brand Sabra on Stephen Colbert's debut episode of CBS' *Late Show* Sept. 8. In a skit, Colbert said an "ancient cursed amulet" is "forcing him to make "certain regrettable compromises" by plugging products on his show. "The amulet commands me to inform you of the delicious taste of tonight's sponsor, Sabra roasted red pepper hummus. It's made from simple, fresh ingredients that bring people together one bite at a time," Colbert said, scooping the hummus on camera. Sabra is a U.S.-based company co-owned by Israeli food manufacturer Strauss and the multinational PepsiCo. Sabra said it was honoured to be a sponsor, while some Twitter commenters said Colbert's reference in the skit to doing the "devil's bidding" was a secret shout-out to BDSers.

Does Tal Ben-Haim use witchcraft?

Soccer dark arts spoil Wales' day

Israeli soccer player Tal Ben-Haim may be a witch, at least according to the British press. In a Sept. 6 Euro 2016 qualifier match between the Israeli and Welsh national teams, the centre back, who plays for Maccabi Tel Aviv in the Israeli league, made peculiar hand gestures at the ball as an opponent was preparing to take a free kick. Moments later, Wales striker Gareth Bale, a clutch scorer for soccer powerhouse Real Madrid, rocketed a kick over the goal. The match ultimately ended in a 0-0 draw, with some media outlets blaming Ben-Haim. Bale's miss was the effect of a "malevolent spell," said *Wales Online*, while the *Independent* said Ben-Haim employed the "dark arts." ■

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COVER PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY TREVOR MILLER

Gematria

2

The number of months since Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Reuven Rivlin have met, reportedly due to differences over Netanyahu's handling of relations with the United States. The pair had previously been meeting monthly.

4

The number of years Israel's embassy in Cairo was closed after Arab Spring protesters stormed it in 2011. It reopened last week.

Quotable

Sometimes it is going to be inevitable that information needs to get out.

— Rabbi Jonathan Ziring, an expert on Judaism and journalistic ethics. Full interview, p. 54

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Mark Mietkiewicz looks at Sukkot and the environment in Jewish & Digital.

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Letters to the Editor

CIJA doesn't speak for all

The hypocrisy of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) is breathtaking. Its CEO Shimon Fogel and chair David Cape write ("The Jewish community needs unity, not uniformity," Sept. 3) that CIJA is non-partisan, yet there is hardly a Conservative government policy that CIJA has not supported, including Bill C-51 on security and changes to refugee law which included denial of health care to pregnant refugee women and sick children.

Fogel and Cape declare that Jewish law demands the election of "tovei ha'ir" (community council) as a matter of "governance at the community level." Yet CIJA's board of directors is self-appointed with no opportunity for input or voting by ordinary community members. CIJA remains the unelected de facto representative of the Jewish community, participating in political affairs through representation at parliamentary committee hearings or being regularly quoted in the mainstream media.

Finally, CIJA has utterly failed to achieve what Fogel and Cape enunciate as "Jewish law oblig[ing] attention to the value of diversity and the critical role of minority opinion." CIJA has never included in its public statements or policies any opinion that differs from its own self-selected leadership.

Perhaps if the governing party changes after the October federal election, CIJA may want to consider transforming itself from a prop for the Conservative party to a representative and democratic organization that embraces all in the Jewish community.

Philip B. Berger
Toronto

BDS vote is anti-Semitism

Is it really the Palestinian and "occupation" issues that so aggrieve the General Council of the United Church of Canada that they voted for boycotts, sanctions and divestment (BDS) aimed at Israel ("United Church strengthens call to end Israeli occupation," Aug. 20)?

The world is witness to atrocities so unimaginable to us, and yet it is unbelievable that the General Council's only focus is on Israel. And yet, with all its concern for the Palestinians, no consideration has been given to compensate the Palestinians made jobless by SodaStream's move to the Negev. The plight of these 600 jobless Palestinians can be attributed to the BDS movement, yet there is no mention of their fate.

For centuries, the church has harassed us, maligned us, denigrated us, robbed us, victimized us, evicted us, and killed us with pogroms, crusades, inquisitions and more recently the Holocaust.

And, wonder of wonders, we are still here. So now you are trying BDS.

In the United Church's zeal for BDS, I hope it includes boycotting any and all ophthalmological, pharmaceutical, dental, medical, surgical, neurological, scientific, technical and agricultural advances made by Jews and Jews in Israel. However, I don't believe you will throw away your cellphones, GPS, voicemail, etc.

I wonder what would happen if Jews imposed a similar BDS on the followers of BDS. But Jews are not of this mindset. They continue to contribute to the good of mankind, despite the senseless hatred, jealousy and envy perpetrated against them by the anti-Semites of this world.

Bess Lokach
Richmond Hill, Ont.

Liberals no friends of Israel

Gabriel Erem, formerly of *Lifestyles* magazine, is to be congratulated for initiating the controversy involving the invitation from Honey and Barry Sherman to meet Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau and York Centre candidate Michael Levitt and by refusing to attend ("JDL to protest at private fundraiser for Trudeau," Aug. 27).

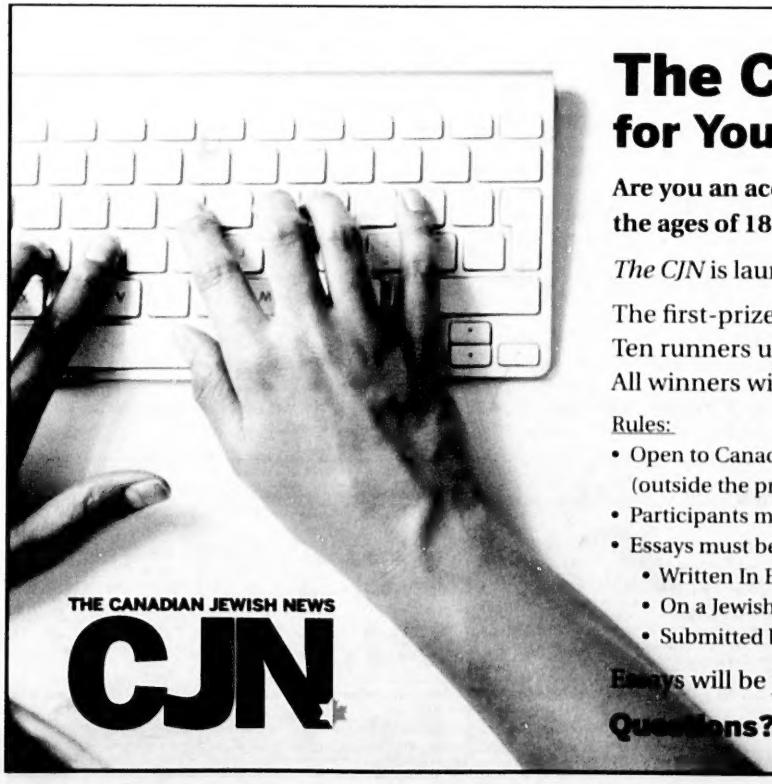
I always found it astounding that prominent members of the Jewish community can support the Liberal Party of Canada. Apart from the revelation that Trudeau is surrounded by a number of pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel advisers, one need only look at Canada's lack of support at the United Nations from one Liberal government to another.

Whenever it came to motions condemning Israel, the most Jews in Canada could hope for was that Canada would abstain, but more times than not, Canada voted in favour of those resolutions.

That lack of support for Israel only stopped when Stephen Harper was elected prime minister, and since then, his unqualified support for the State of Israel has been something every Jew in Canada should honour and cherish.

Bert Raphael
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**.
We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.



The CJN Prize for Young Writers

Are you an accomplished or aspiring writer between the ages of 18 and 29? Then we want to hear from you!

The CJN is launching our prize for excellence in Jewish writing.

The first-prize winner will receive **$1,800.**
Ten runners up will each receive **$180.**
All winners will be published by the award-winning *CJN*.

Rules:

- Open to Canadian citizens and residents of Canada (outside the province of Quebec)
- Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 29
- Essays must be
  - Written In English and be between 500 and 1,000 words
  - On a Jewish theme of your choice
  - Submitted by **Oct. 22, 2015** to contest@thecjn.ca

Essays will be judged by an independent panel of experts.

Questions? Contact contest@thecjn.ca

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A NEW YEAR,
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Rosh Hashana is traditionally a time to look back at the year just past. It is also a time of looking forward to a New Year... a new beginning.

May this New Year be one of peace. Peace of mind, peace of spirit, and may it bring peace and a new beginning to the people of Israel.

Shana Tova from the Benjamin and Levitt families and all the staff at Benjamin's.

RABBI-2-RABBI

Awakening to the Syrian refugee crisis

Whenever the worst in humanity emerges, Jews are first in line to help out and can be counted on to display the best in humanity

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
TEMPLE EMANU-EL-BETH SHOLOM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Grushcow: Coinciding with the High Holiday season, the world has woken up to the Syrian refugee crisis. The awful death of three-year old Alan Kurdi, his brother and mother has left us with indelible images of the human costs of this tragedy.

Looking in the machzor, I see the *Unetaneh Tokef* prayer, with the words, "Who by fire, and who by water" and I think of those drowned trying to reach safe shores. It is not a new problem – either in terms of the current refugee crisis, or the history of human suffering – but it is addressing us with urgency this year.

I announced on Rosh Hashanah that our temple will sponsor a Syrian refugee family, just as we sponsored families when the Vietnamese boat people came. I hope that in this way, we can make a difference in the new year.

Rabbi Korobkin: My mother was one of the 10,000 children saved during World War II on the Kindertransport by the British. Although her parents perished, had it not been for Britain's compassion for a refugee, neither she nor her entire family would be alive today. So I certainly feel the obligation to welcome as many refugees as we can.

That said, our shul, in consultation with the Canadian government, will be working on sponsoring Christian and other non-Muslim refugees from Syria. These refugees' lives are the most endangered at present, since it's too dangerous for them to even be in refugee camps. They include Yazidis, Chaldeans, Armenians and many others.

I applaud your efforts and hope that HaShem allows us to "pay it forward." We can do no less.

Rabbi Grushcow: Rabbi Jonathan Sacks recently wrote about the refugee crisis, and he, too, cited the Kindertransport. He then went on to say something that I think is essential: "I used to think that the most important line in the Bible was 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Then I realized that it is easy to love your neighbour, because he or she is usually quite like yourself. What is hard is to love the stranger, one whose colour, culture or creed is different from yours."

> *God knows there are plenty of people who need help, and I believe God counts on us all to do it.*
>
> **Rabbi Lisa Grushcow**

Like you, we will work with the government and other agencies to find a family to support. We will not specify a non-Muslim family, nor will we look specifically for one of any particular faith. At times like this, I think it is our shared humanity that matters most of all.

God knows there are plenty of people who need help, and I believe God counts on us all to do it. There will be people affected by this long after the headlines have moved onto other topics. Together, may we have the passion and persistence to respond.

Rabbi Korobkin: The reality we all have to face is that no matter how many refugees Canada, Europe, the United States or any other country will be willing to accept, there simply is no way to absorb the more than four million refugees that are displaced and trying to find sanctuary. Until a solution is found on the ground to deal with ISIS, we simply have to triage the best we can.

One thing that the Jewish People are good at is making lemonade out of lemons. When people are in crisis, we are zealously the first in line to give tzedakah and help out. Whenever the worst in humanity emerges, you can count on our people to display the best in humanity.

May this new year augur blessings for the refugees and the entire world. ■

How to reach us

Vol. XLV, No. 36 (2,212)*

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Subscription inquiries: 416-932-5095
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Sales, National & Toronto Local: Canadian Primedia, 416-922-3605

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IMP, Tel: 02-625-2933, E-mail: info@impmedia.co.il

Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation:
July 14, 2015

Postmaster: Please return 29Bs and changes of address to: CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7.
Postage Paid at Toronto Canada Post Publication Agreement #40010684
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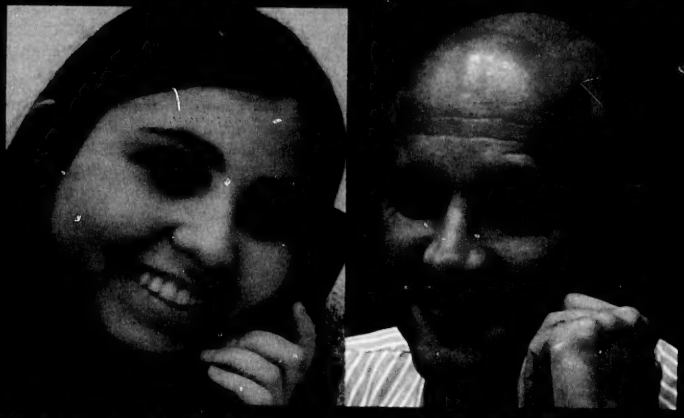

Last year, UJA telethons raised more than $5.2 million in support of its Annual Campaign. This year, with increased costs and demands, you can help surpass that figure just by answering the phone.

Starting **September 8th and through to the 20th,** when a UJA volunteer calls your home during Super Week, please answer the call and give generously.

And so do we.

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Visit www.ujatelethons.com to sign up to volunteer or contact Rafi Yablonsky at ryablonsky@ujafed.org or 416.631.5820 for more information.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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An independent community newspaper serving as a forum for diverse viewpoints
Publisher and Proprietor: The Canadian Jewish News, a corporation without share capital. Head Office: 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord Ont. L4K 2L7

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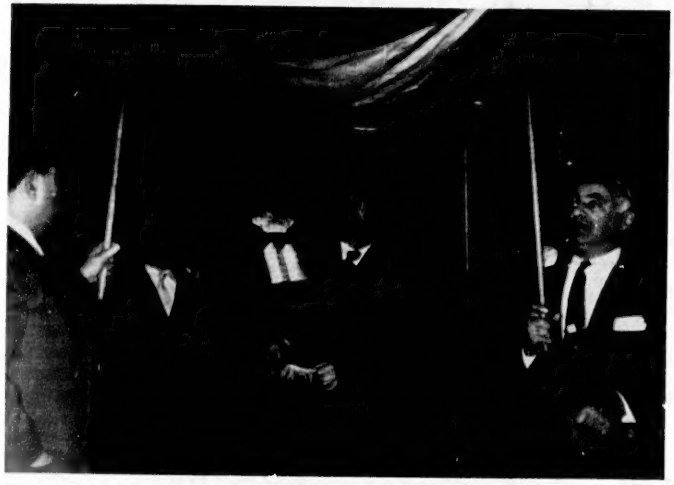

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

The completion and presentation of a sefer Torah to Toronto's Clanton Park Synagogue, 1956.

SeeJN | Sandstorm

YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

Young women outside the Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem's Old City wear face masks Sept. 8 to shield themselves from a sandstorm that blanketed Israel for several days last week. More than 600 people were treated in hospital due to the storm.

From Yoni's Desk

Judaism and journalism

At a recent symposium entitled "Journalism and Judaism," hosted by the Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash in Toronto, I was asked how journalism contributes positively to society, in spite of the fact that the media are often viewed with mistrust by the Jewish community. My answer was that journalism offers three benefits to readers: it informs and educates, it brings people together and it empowers individuals. (You can watch the entire conversation at koshertube.com.)

Each week, when you pick up your copy of *The Canadian Jewish News*, you engage in the process of learning – you discover things you didn't know before, and digest new perspectives and opinions on subjects you thought you knew. It's part of our collective continuing education – and once we acquire that knowledge, we can share it, which makes us all smarter. For most journalists I know, that's one of the greatest professional satisfactions, and if we aren't contributing some kind of learning on a regular basis to our readers, then we're not doing our jobs.

Journalism also has the power to reduce boundaries and bring communities closer by sparking important conversations. This is especially true in non-partisan publications, like *The CJN*, where the focus is less on points of argument and divergence and more about the exchange of ideas and positions. Each week in these pages, you can find stories and commentary from a wide spectrum of Jewish views – in many cases, the opinions expressed may very well contradict each other. But by publishing conflicting ideas side by side, our hope is that we are diminishing divisions and building bridges in the Jewish community. If these ideas can live together in our pages, surely they can coexist beyond *The CJN* as well.

But if journalism can be a positive for communities, it is also empowering on the personal level. I am constantly awed by the number of excellent writers out there in the Jewish community, most of whom have little or no idea of the depth of their talent. We often hear from writers who seemingly come out of nowhere to deliver quality journalism – sometimes they offer emotional narratives based on personal experiences, other times they present nuanced analyses of current events, or reconstructions of forgotten bits of history. Whatever the subject or style, there is an incredible wealth of potential out there, and we consider it one of our most important duties to tap into that, especially when it comes to younger writers.

In that spirit, *The CJN* has launched our first contest for excellence in Jewish writing, open to writers between the ages of 19 and 29. It's our attempt to expose the Jewish community to its next generation of journalists.

The rules are simple: Essays must be between 500 and 1,000 words and focus on a Jewish theme – the rest is up to your imagination. The deadline for submissions is Oct. 22, and the best essays will be published by *The CJN*.

And if that's not motivation enough, how's this: The winning essayist gets $1,800. (The contest is open to all Canadians and residents of Canada, excluding Quebec.)

Send your entries to contest@thecjn.ca. We're looking forward to reading your work. ■ — YONI

REFLECTIONS

The most unhappy time of my childhood

Rabbi Allan Levine

All of my adult life, I have been active in the struggle for civil rights and social justice. The sources for this passion were my personal experiences as a child and youth, my upbringing at home, the profound influence of my congregational rabbi, the impact of study of the prophets at rabbinical school, and the impact of the Holocaust on my life.

My Canadian-born parents had attended college but did not complete their studies. My family, during my childhood, went through a number of periods of economic hardship. In the early '40s after not being able to pay the rent for a number of months, we were evicted from the house we rented. During World War II it was impossible to find housing. We were forced to move to an agricultural rural community outside of Montreal where we were the only Jewish family in the community and I was the only Jewish child in an enormous school. About a year later, we moved back to Montreal. My mother and I lived with my grandmother and two unmarried aunts. I slept in a bedroom with one of my aunts. My brother Marvin, six years older than me, lived in an apartment with relatives, and my father lived in a hotel.

This was the most unhappy time of my childhood. We knew what poverty was about. Everyone tried their best to be warm with us, but each of us knew that we were an imposition and an interference in the privacy of others. Today, I know we were lucky. There were many in similar circumstances without family willing to sacrifice and take them in.

A "Gentiles Only" sign from 1932 ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

As a child, that had never occurred to me. All that I understood was that the family was so poor that we could not be together. During this period, I think that my brother suffered the most. At least my mother and I lived in the same house. Then our economic situation improved. Around 1944, my brother saved the day. He knew of a British war refugee family that was returning to Great Britain; we got their apartment and were reunited as a normal family.

We never lived in a "Jewish neighbourhood." At home, I never heard a racist remark or disparagement of another person's religion. Black students studying with me in high school often came to my house to prepare homework. For me, this was part of the normality of my life.

The environment at home was very different from that of the schools I attended and the broader communities in which we dwelt. Frequently, I fell victim to anti-Semitism. I felt the pain in my bones and my psyche. Often I was called "dirty Jew" and heard other disparaging remarks from schoolmates and neighbours (some of them friends), teachers (both in public school and in high school), shopkeepers or just people on the streets. It was not uncommon for me to be called "Christ killer," "cheating Jew," "money-grabbing Jew," "kike" and to hear, "too bad Hitler didn't kill all the Jews." Anti-Semitic jokes were common amongst teachers and friends.

As I was a young child residing on streets without other Jewish families, my neighbouring friends were all non-Jewish. Most of these friends were not anti-Semitic, but sometimes I heard painful remarks. My best friend's mother, a wonderful human being, once called me aside and told me, "You must go home before my husband returns from work. He does not permit Jews in our home. You can play with Dick [her son] in our house and as much as you want while my husband is at work, but it will be very bad for Dick and for me if my husband finds you here or knows that you have been here." Now, 60 years later, I can still visualize the scene and feel the pain – mine, her's and Dick's.

Another type of pain was in my battered bones and bloody bruises from having been physically attacked and beaten on my way to school and on the way home from school. Normally, these beatings by schoolmates were accompanied by a litany of encouragement from the anti-Semitic chorus of the audience of onlookers.

I particularly remember a trauma shared with my father. My father, a salesman, invited me to join him on a four- or five-day sales trip covering well over 1,000 miles. Usually, we stayed at hotels at night. One day, we walked into a very large and famous store with his samples and catalogues. After about an hour, he came out beaming with a very substantial order. The store owner shook my father's hand, said goodbye and how wonderful it was to see his old friend again. My father was absolutely elated with his warm reception at this store and his significant sale.

A few hours later, as evening approached, my father, looking for a hotel and finding no rooms available, said, "My friend, the owner of that store, has a magnificent lodge. Let's go and sleep there."

As we were driving through the sumptuous grounds towards the lodge, I saw a small sign on the grass: "No Jews or dogs allowed." Either my father didn't notice the sign, or he chose not to mention it to me. We entered the hotel and this same friend ran to my father before he could approach the desk, put his arm around my father's shoulder and said to him, "I am sorry Harry, but I am sure you understand," and off we went to continue to look for a hotel.

My father was clearly hurt, though he did not say a word, but I have never forgotten that moment. ■

Rabbi Allan Levine was born in Montreal. He currently lives in Israel.

Is pay-to-pray a sustainable model for shuls?

As more and more Jewish families consider whether to pay their dues, synagogues are experimenting with new membership formulas

LILA SARICK
LSarick@thecjn.ca

Harris (not his real name) had made his children's bar and bat mitzvahs at what he thought of as his synagogue. But when divorce and a business downturn forced him to ask for a reduction on his shul dues, he was rebuffed.

"They gave me such a hard time. They made me feel so belittled," he recalls.

"Most synagogues say pay what you can, but to get to that point, you're already humbled and embarrassed."

He left and has never again joined a synagogue.

Harris' story is a cautionary tale for synagogues as they try to find creative ways to keep the lights turned on and the rabbi paid. Increasingly, they are finding members are unwilling or unable to pay dues or even join in the first place.

Even discussing the issue is delicate. Many synagogues do not post their fee schedules on their websites and do not relish talking about dues. Some synagogues are even moving away from calling the annual payments dues.

Rabbi Levi Gansburg

"Dues implies fee for service," said Paul Leszner, president of the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism. For Jews who may only attend over Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, they may feel they're "not getting value for their money."

Synagogue dues across the country (Building fund fees not included)

Synagogue	Denomination	Dues
Congregation Beth Israel – Vancouver	Conservative	fair share – 2% pre-tax income, max. $4,800
Or Shalom Synagogue – Vancouver	Renewal	family $1,700
Sephardic Kehila Centre-Abir Yaakob Congregation – Toronto	Orthodox Sephardi	family $1,500
Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue – Toronto	Conservative	family $2,160 single parent $1,150
Makom – Toronto	Unafilliated	none
City Shul – Toronto	Reform	individual $700-$1,600 family $1,250-$2,500
Shaarei Shomayim Congregation – Toronto	Orthodox	based on income – from $2,000-$3,000
Chabad of Danforth/Beaches – Toronto	Chabad	none (suggested donation $180 per family)
Chabad of York Mills – Toronto	Chabad	family $1,800
Or Haneshamah – Ottawa	Reconstructionist	one-adult family $650 two-adult family $1,250
Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom – Montreal	Reform	family $1,780 single parents $1,250
Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem – Montreal	Orthodox	family $1,225
Shaar Shalom Congregation – Halifax	Conservative	family $1,880

Instead Reform congregations are referring to an "annual commitment" or use the biblical word *trumah*.

"You're making a commitment to the work a synagogue is going to do. You're belonging to a community. You can participate as you like," Leszner said.

In some dues-averse Chabad shuls, fees may be called partnerships or memberships, said Rabbi Levi Gansburg, who leads Toronto's Chabad of York Mills.

"We don't want it [paying dues] to have that stigma," he said.

With dues for two-parent families starting at more than $1,000 and rising steeply, it is apparent why the fees are a touchy issue.

"In general, people are feeling the pinch. It's difficult to find it [money for dues] in your household budget, and joining a synagogue isn't a given anymore," said Cindy Joseph, chair of the membership committee at Beth Radom Congregation, a Toronto Conservative synagogue.

"We find we're having to sell people on what value they're going to get."

Beth Radom recently introduced a 25 per cent discount for new members who also have children in Jewish day school.

Synagogues, facing a growing gap between what they bring in and what they spend, are re-thinking the way they fund themselves, said Barry Mael, the New York-based director of kehilla operations and finance for the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

The most common method of charging a flat rate, often based on age, with deep discounts for new members, doesn't offer the flexibility and discretion needed, Mael said.

"Someone wants to start a relationship [with a synagogue] and you're already having to cut a deal," Mael said, referring to complicated fee structures.

Some shuls have found it easier, and more equitable, to use what is called a fair-share model, in which members pay based on their income.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

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Unetaneh Tokef in heels

Avrum Rosensweig

She walked into shul trying to not appear haughty. It was Rosh Hashanah, and she had dressed well for the occasion, for the people. She would impress.

Over and over, she imagined how she would get to her seat in the middle of the row, having to squeeze by the entire Goldman family to do so. How humiliating.

She thought that having her family name on the sanctuary would secure her a better seat, but that was not the case. The committee explained the place she wanted belonged to the Rosensteins, who had their name on the entire building. It made sense.

A man finished the Haftorah about Hannah, the childless woman. She stood with the congregation as the Torah was safely returned to the Aron Kodesh. The rabbi said, "Please take your seats." He began his sermon.

"He is no longer with us. She has passed from this world," the rabbi said sadly. "'Who shall live and who shall die' was answered through the death of our loved ones this year. Their time on this earth is over. They will not return to us. They are now with the angels. They are now with God."

A tear fell to her dress. She was about to sob. The tastefully dressed woman wanted desperately to leave, but she couldn't. She was wedged, like a branch in a dam, into her seat. Exiting without embarrassing herself – squeezing past that family again – was just too much.

"Who by fire?," the rabbi asked. "Who by the sword? Who shall have rest and who shall wander?"

So she closed her eyes ever so tightly. The child's image appeared again. He sat on the beach by the water, rigorously with clarity of purpose, scooping sand into and out of a deep hole he had created. His blond hair flowed and he laughed uncontrollably, a sort of soulful chortle, still connected to God.

> *The tastefully dressed woman wanted desperately to leave, but she couldn't.*

"Will we survive this year, 5776, my fellow Jews?" the rabbi wondered aloud.

He laughed again. She heard it clearly. She saw his eyes bright, never did they dim, looking at her, bidding her to dig with him, around him.

The rabbi's voice grew louder.

"How many shall pass away and how many shall be born?" he yelled this time.

It startled the little beach boy. He began to cry, and he reached for her. He reached for her. And the lady wriggled in her chair, sobbing, her arms stuck to her side unable to budge.

"Who shall live and who shall die?" the rabbi asked quietly. "We do not know, yet we are all here today to ask God that we are the *Shehechiyanu* in His prayer, that we are the ones sustained, enabled with His breath, that we deserve life."

His voice bellowed: "*Baruch atah Adoshem, Elokeinu Melech Haolam, she-hechiyanu v'kiyimanu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh.* Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has granted us life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion."

The sandcastle was filled, its demarcations invisible. The little boy was no longer.

The congregation stood for *Kaddish*. Then those sitting next to the elegant mother stepped into the aisle, allowing her to find her way out and, with dignity, find her way home.

She expressed a tearful look of appreciation and walked gracefully to the door, looking ravishing with every step.

The usher smiled respectfully. She smiled in return. ■

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My problem with Kol Nidrei

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz

Kol Nidrei should have disappeared a long time ago. After its introduction in the 800s, it was sharply opposed for the next 400 years by rabbinic authorities who saw it as a meaningless gesture. In the 1100s, a debate emerged over which vows, future or past, *Kol Nidrei* refers to. And in the 19th century, because of anti-Semitic claims that it enabled Jews to violate oaths, many reformers (and even, for short time, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch) removed *Kol Nidrei* from the service. It is a problematic prayer.

So why is *Kol Nidrei* still part of the service? Only because of the melody. There are moving tunes, in both the Ashkenazi and the Sephardi tradition, for *Kol Nidrei*. No matter what, it is here to stay because the tunes are majestic and awe-inspiring.

This was my problem with *Kol Nidrei*. I was trained in Lithuanian-style yeshivot to think about serious Jewish content, about talmudic texts and theological sources; *Kol Nidrei* is the opposite of that. *Kol Nidrei* is a ritual that hangs by less than a thread of hair, with an inferior halachic pedigree, and is only preserved because of its tune. It bothered me that it is religious fluff, all musical culture and minimal religious content. So why did it find a place of honour leading off the Yom Kippur liturgy?

Frankly, contemporary Judaism is overstocked with religious fluff. There was an advertisement many years ago from a yeshiva in Jerusalem that had a picture of a bagel, lox and cream cheese sandwich with the caption: "Is this the culmination of 3,000 years of Jewish history?" This sadly is all too often the case, with Jewish identity reduced to the soundtrack of *Fiddler on the Roof*, brisket and satin kippahs. This superficial cultural Judaism offers no rationale for continuity, and no true link to spirituality.

Because of this, I saw content and culture as antagonists. To me, bagels, lox and cream cheese Judaism was the opposite of the Judaism that nurtured me in yeshiva. And even the melodies like *Kol Nidrei* were just superficial enhancements, pleasant, but ultimately unimportant.

But I was wrong. Culture is important too. Melodies, foods, even jokes have a role in preserving Judaism.

In the language of Halachah, we call these elements a minhag, or a custom. Minhag is about the little distinctive cultural touches that make observance more fascinating. Rabbi Maimon (the father of the Rambam) wrote about the importance of respecting customs like eating doughnuts (sfinj) on Chanukah. Indeed, it is often the customs, with their distinctive tastes, aromas, colours and melodies that inspire us in ways we are not fully aware of.

What my overly intellectual perspective had missed is this: that the little things, the aromas, tastes, colours and melodies, are a powerful way of conveying the content, the great ideas I so love. Culture can create an emotional connection unavailable in the world of ideas.

And this is the power of *Kol Nidrei*, the power of singing the same song as our grandparents, even if the words are obscure. And even the intellectually inclined among us should never overlook it.

In 1913, a young intellectual decided to convert to Christianity. As a final farewell to Judaism, he decided to go to Yom Kippur services. But after listening to *Kol Nidrei*, he left a transformed man. In the years that followed, this man, Franz Rozensweig, became a prominent Jewish philosopher and inspired many others to make their journey back to Judaism.

Ironically, a great intellectual was drawn back to Judaism by *Kol Nidrei*, a prayer that is more melody than meaning. And even today, otherwise alienated Jews show up for *Kol Nidrei*, drawn in by the inspiring melody.

Now, if we could only teach our alienated Jews how to love the content, to engage the ideas of Judaism as well. ■

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz is the spiritual leader of Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem, Montreal.

Jaslo on Spadina: memories and reflections

Rabbi Dow Marmur

The recreation on Spadina Road in Toronto's Forest Hill of the façade of the synagogue in Jaslo, Poland, that was destroyed during the Holocaust is touching.

Though I don't remember the synagogue, perhaps because my parents didn't go there or didn't take me, I've memories of other places in the town: our apartment, the main street with an ice cream stand where I'd be taken for treats, my father's office in the local glassworks, and friends.

My only happy childhood memories are from Jaslo. My parents moved there before I was born and we lived in the town until Sept. 1, 1939, the day Germany invaded Poland. The Jewish owner of the glassworks had a farm not far from the city then called Lwow or Lemberg, now Lviv in Ukraine, and offered to take my mother and me there. My father joined us later.

That's how we survived. In the pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, that part of what had been Poland came under Soviet occupation, and we were thus saved from the crematoria where the rest of the Jews of Jaslo ended up. The Soviets deported us to Siberia. After about a year there, and some four years in Uzbekistan, we returned to Poland in 1946, hungry and confused, yet alive.

But not to Jaslo. The town had been devastated during the war. Some of the workers who were ready to restart the glassworks asked my father to manage it. Prudently, he declined. Within two years, we left for Sweden.

I returned to Jaslo more than three decades later with my wife and family. Our aim was to show our children our roots. My wife Fredzia was born in Lodz, Poland's second-largest city, and survived the war in its ghetto and in a German concentration camp. She was rescued with her mother by the Swedish Red Cross a few days before the end of the war.

When we visited Jaslo, Poland was still under Communism and the town reflected its worst features. There was something ghost-like about it. The then-occupant allowed us to see the apartment where I had lived with my parents. Nothing seemed to have changed. Like everything else we saw in Jaslo, it was in need of a facelift.

They were even still blowing glass in the way I remembered it from my childhood. Modernization had passed them by.

There were no Jews in the town, and there aren't any today. In the 1950s, a memorial book about the Jews of Jaslo was published in Yiddish, also available in English, as a verbal monument to the dead.

The choice by the Toronto congregation to commemorate the synagogue in Jaslo is a laudable effort to remember a place of Jewish worship that was burned down by the Nazis twice – the first time local Poles tried to save it. My parents would often say that there was no anti-Semitism in the town, and I certainly don't remember any from my childhood.

However, the façade of the destroyed synagogue should in no way turn the Toronto version into a memorial shrine. Every Jewish institution being built today must be evidence of contemporary Judaism that's alive and thriving, despite the challenges and the memories.

There's a tendency in some quarters, particularly among those who've no personal experience of the destruction of European Jewry, to turn the Holocaust into a kind of religion that allows the past to control and perhaps stifle the present. The Shoah must indeed be commemorated at special events and in special places, but synagogues should be there to help worshippers celebrate the present and look toward the future.

I hope, therefore, that the room to commemorate the Holocaust that's planned for the new building won't be turned into a chapel. It's by living in the here and now that we make sure – in the Toronto Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim's famous words – that Hitler won't have a posthumous victory. ■

Does banning anti-Muslim remarks prevent radicalization?

Sheryl Saperia

The Quebec government has introduced Bill 59, which sets out to combat publicly disseminated hate speech and speech inciting violence.

While noble in intention, the bill contains many of the problems associated with Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act. Parliament repealed that contentious provision two years ago to protect free speech from the reaches of a zealous bureaucracy that struggled to distinguish between hateful and offensive speech. Moreover, defendants lacked basic rights to due process, a speedy trial, access to an attorney and even truth as a defence. Critics of Section 13 pointed out then, as do opponents of Bill 59, that the Criminal Code already covers hate speech and ensures those protections under the law.

The context in which Bill 59 has come about is also essential to understanding the full extent of its danger. Jacques Frémont, director of the Quebec Human Rights Commission and driver of these legislative changes, explained in a 2014 speech that he intended to use his new powers against people critical of Islam. No other religion was referenced. Meanwhile, Quebec Premier Phillipe Couillard brought the bill forward as part of his counter-radicalization program, implying in his remarks that one cause of Islamist radicalization is the existence of hateful speech against Islam.

Would prohibiting hate speech against Islam help to prevent radicalization?

The bill's proponents might answer in the affirmative. First, otherwise disenfranchised Muslims could feel a stronger sense of belonging and loyalty to their home. Second, the Muslim community might feel more accepted in society and, therefore, more willing to report concerns to the police. Third, individuals angry about remarks critical of Islam would have recourse through a non-violent, legal process.

Perhaps unwittingly, this approach is premised on a doctrine about the dynamics of radicalization that benefits the radicalizers. Moreover, the arguments against Bill 59 are far more compelling.

First, Canada already welcomes people of every background and proscribes discrimination under numerous legal instruments. Banning "hate speech" – an undefined term in the bill – and entrusting the enforcement of this vague prohibition to an activist human rights commission would disproportionately infringe on Canadians' right to freedom of speech, one of the fundamental cornerstones of a liberal democracy.

Second, Bill 59 would suppress legitimate viewpoints and concomitantly empower and embolden those sympathetic to an extremist Islamist narrative. Some very prominent moderate Muslim voices in this country have published articles in which they plead with policymakers not to allow their voices to be silenced by the bill. They note that those who speak out against honour killings or the death sentence for apostates and adulterers as problematic aspects of a radical Islamist worldview could be brought before a tribunal, charged an exorbitant fine and publicly shamed as hate speech offenders.

Third, we might assess Bill 59 within the framework of a recent article in the *Atlantic* titled "The coddling of the American mind." The authors of that piece examine the growing movement on college campuses to censor ideas and language that might adversely affect students' emotional well-being. They find that a "culture devoted to policing speech and punishing speakers," with an institutionalized fixation on micro-aggressions and trigger warnings, and the belief in having a right not to be offended, actually has the opposite intended effect on students' mental health. (Micro-aggressions are seemingly innocuous actions or words that are nonetheless considered violent. Trigger warnings are to be issued by professors if course materials might generate strong emotion.)

Bill 59 could run the risk of similar problems across the province, fostering a culture of victimhood, divisiveness and acrimony, and rendering our society unable to engage issues critically.

In the face of public outcry, Couillard has conceded the bill may excessively chill free speech. Quebecers and Canadians must continue to speak out for their right to speak freely. The frenzy of a federal election cannot distract us from contesting legislation whose impact will be felt far beyond provincial borders. ■

Sheryl Saperia is director of policy for Canada at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

News

Jewish schools grapple with new sex ed curriculum

SHERI SHEFA
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With the start of the new school year came an added challenge for Jewish day school administrators in Toronto, some of whom have spent months working to implement the amendments to Ontario's new health and physical education curriculum, which includes changes to how and when sexual education issues are taught.

Under the revamped curriculum, which had not been updated since 1998, Grade 1 students are expected to learn the anatomically correct names of body parts, including sexual organs. Grade 2 students will learn about basic stages of human development.

Third graders will learn how to show respect for people with visible differences, such as skin colour, body shapes and sizes, people who have different physical abilities, and invisible differences, including "gender identity, sexual orientation, family background, and personal preferences."

In Grade 4, students will learn about bullying, both in person and online, as well as physical changes accompanying puberty and personal hygiene. In Grade 5, they'll learn about parts of the reproductive system, and what to expect from puberty.

Sixth graders will learn more about puberty, healthy relationships, and address stereotypes and assumptions. In Grade 7, students will be taught about the risks of early pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and the concept of consent, and in Grade 8, topics including contraception, sexual intimacy, decisions about sexual activity, and discussions about gender identity and sexual orientation will be explored.

Rabbi Elliott Diamond

Eric Petersiel, head of school at Leo Baeck Day School, said the sexual education component is only a small part of the revamped health and physical education curriculum.

"Much of what is being taught is what we're already teaching through a combination of our physical education program and our guidance curriculum," Petersiel said.

"We've added additional time with the physical education specialist to present the health curriculum as a core part of the curriculum for every student from grades 1 to 5. For grades 6, 7 and 8, the more sensitive issues are delivered by a social worker from Jewish Family & Child and we pay to have that done so the kids can be split by gender and not have a teacher in the room and have a more open conversation about the more sensitive topics."

Petersiel said he's pleased with the new curriculum as a whole, because it tackles issues such as mental health and how to make positive, healthy choices in life.

"They deal with all the issues that we try to deal with, and they gave it a proper curriculum structure around self esteem, emotional development, understanding differences… So in Grade 3, there is [a lesson about] visible and invisible differences in people, and respect. These are all things, as a Jewish day school, that we take very seriously and have always made a core part of our home-base curriculum," he said.

"It's not about focusing on how we are going to help children create their own gender identity or their sexual orientation, it's about how we acknowledge that people are different from each other in a myriad of ways and how those differences are actually positives to make each person unique."

Amy Platt, director of general studies at Bialik Hebrew Day School, said the school has reviewed the new curriculum "carefully and believes that each of the expectations can be taught in an age-appropriate way and in a manner that suits the values that are integral to our school. During the course of this year, we will work with our homeroom and physical education teachers to facilitate an appropriate and measured approach" to implementing it.

Netivot HaTorah Day School's communications director referred to a statement Rabbi Elliott Diamond, head of Jewish studies, sent to *The CJN* last May regarding the new curriculum.

"While our school strives to implement the ministry's guidelines in the areas of core curriculum, we have chosen not to implement the health curriculum in its entirety. We feel that elements of the program – specifically the sex education sections – reflect a position that is not supported by our parent body and our religious perspective," Rabbi Diamond wrote.

Although private elementary schools are not obligated to follow the provincial curriculum, private high schools are.

Renee Cohen, principal of the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy's Kimel campus in Vaughan, said high school students are required to take one course in health and physical education to earn their Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

"Our students in their Grade 9 year at TanenbaumCHAT take healthy active living education to satisfy this Ontario Ministry of Education requirement. Many students will continue to take physical education courses throughout their four years of high school, but it's only required as part of their Grade 9 year," Cohen said.

"As an accredited and ministry-inspected school, TanenbaumCHAT will follow the… curriculum, and we will teach all strands of the curriculum," she said, adding that physical education teachers at both TanenbaumCHAT campuses have worked together to revise lesson plans.

"We've always taught this as a health component, and a lot of what is in the new curriculum is similar to what was taught in the past." She added she's yet to hear from concerned parents about the new curriculum.

Rabbi Seth Grauer, head of school for Yeshivat Or Chaim, an Orthodox high school for boys, and Ulpanat Orot, its counterpart for girls, declined to comment for this story. Messages to Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School, Robbins Hebrew Academy, and Associated Hebrew Schools were not immediately returned. ■

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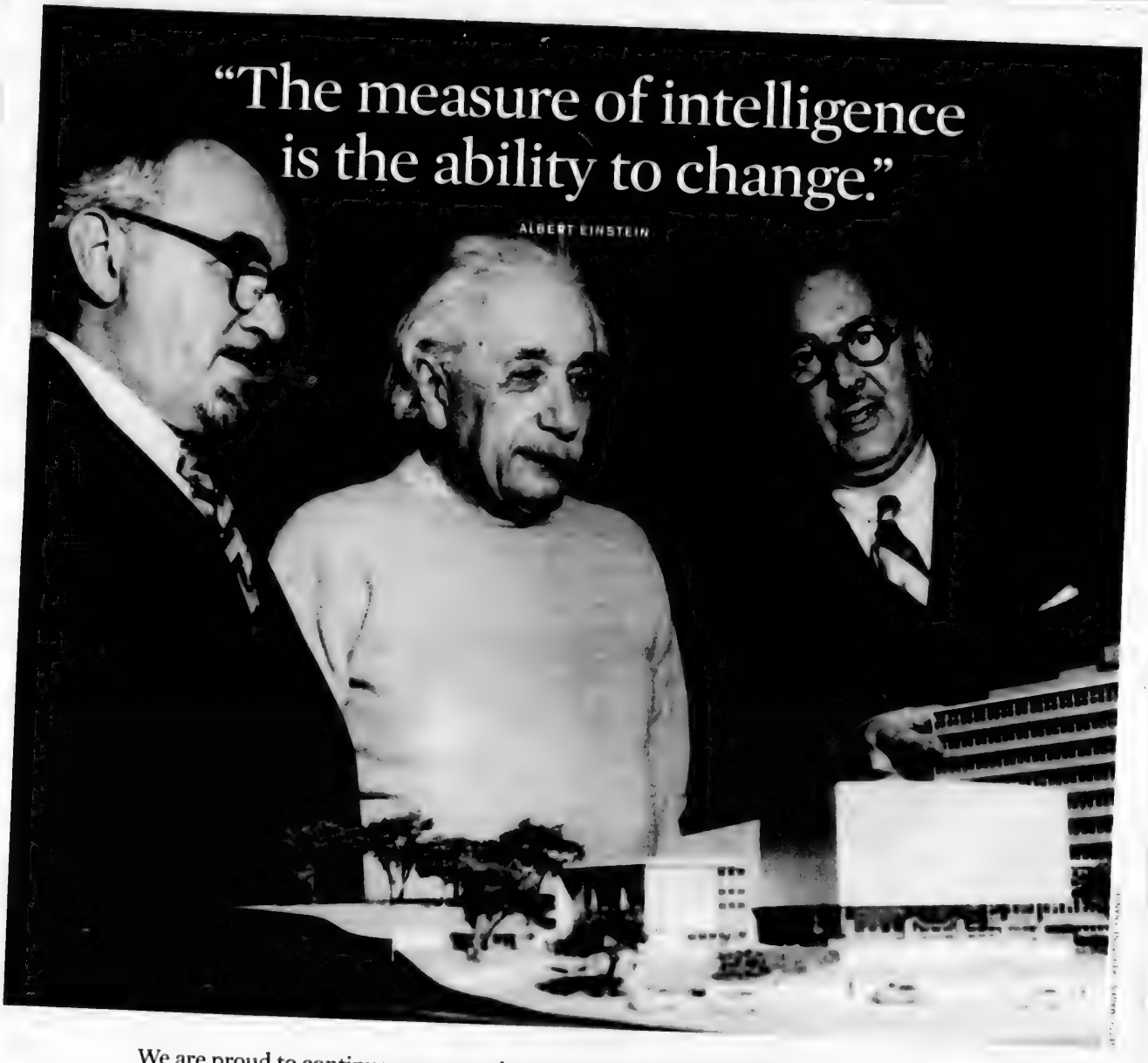

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Maman makes his case for helping Yazidi captives

PAUL LUNGEN
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If no good deed goes unpunished, then Steve Maman understands why he's come under fire for helping bring Yazidi girls to freedom.

Recently a letter was published by a Yazidi group in Iraq questioning whether he had in fact helped liberate nearly 130 Yazidi girls who had been taken as slaves by Islamic State (ISIS) fighters and supporters.

Maman, who was in Toronto last week for a rally in support of Yazidis, told *The CJN* he has evidence to support his claims – fingerprints, statements, witnesses. The attacks from a small group of Yazidis in Iraq is nothing but domestic politics, Maman said. They are not community leaders and "they're doing this for political reasons, to get a seat in the next election [in Kurdistan]," he said.

Despite the naysayers, Maman has his backers. Speaking at the rally, Mirza Ismail, chair of Yezidi Human Rights Organization-International, who travels regularly to the Middle East to monitor the situation, endorsed Maman's role in freeing enslaved Yazidis.

And *The Times of Israel* quoted Rev. Andrew White, an Anglican priest living in Baghdad and who knows Maman's Iraqi contacts, as saying, "I don't question him or his motives one iota. The fact is that many women and children have been released from captivity because of this dear man."

For Maman, there's a moral imperative behind his work. He references the Jewish experience in Europe between 1939 and 1945, when the world stood by and did nothing. The ISIS attacks on the Yazidis is simply something he feels he cannot ignore.

It should have been addressed at least a year ago, when the genocide began, he said. There are only 30,000 ISIS fighters wreaking havoc in the region, suggesting a military option is necessary to bring their reign of terror to an end.

As for the public, "you can't say you didn't know. If you don't act, you don't care," he said.

So how does a guy from Montreal rescue young captives in a conflict thousands of miles away? For 20 years Maman, a native of Morocco, has been in the vintage car business, dealing directly with buyers in the Middle East. "I know the culture," he said.

He also knows powerful players in the region. A couple of years ago, he made some key connections while trying to acquire cars once owned by Saddam Hussein.

He convinced his Iraqi contacts to get involved with his efforts to free Yazidi slaves. They, too, both Sunnis and Shiites, are "appalled by ISIS," he said.

Steve Maman, left, with Mirza Ismail

Leveraging his ties in the region, Maman set up a team of people, headed by an Iraqi who once worked for the U.S. army.

"They don't go in and get the children themselves. They work with contacts in Mosul [considered the ISIS capital], who work with the same purpose we do, to get the girls out and stop the pain."

The team negotiates the freedom of Yazidi girls – some of them as young as nine when they were sold in the Mosul market.

Maman stresses the girls are not ransomed. "There's no buying. All there is, is negotiating." When the "owner" is confronted with a message from a local Islamic authority telling him to release the girl, they release the girl, he said.

When he started his venture, he raised funds through GoFundMe. But his access to the crowdsourcing website was ended for reasons that remain unclear. Now he raises money through the website of the Liberation of Christian and Yazidi Children of Iraq [CYCI], a group he founded, as well as its Facebook page and supporters.

Speaking at the Toronto rally, Maman explained his rationale for creating the organization. He cited Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, a famous rabbi who died in the early 1800s, who said prayers said in seclusion are the most powerful, and God takes great pleasure in hearing them.

Jews uttered these prayers of pain and abandonment in Auschwitz, and he imagined Yazidis are saying similar ones today.

"I wanted to help these innocents because these prayers in seclusion, these prayers of distress, came once again 70 years later. This time, it came from Mosul. This time, it came from women and children. Some of whom saw their brothers, sons and husbands get beheaded in front of them before being taken away and sold as sex slaves. Being held in cages. Being underfed and beaten. Being raped up to 30 times a day. Being resold numerous times. Being treated like cattle. Basically, being killed every single day, without their soul leaving their body!"

Maman said people have two options: acting or being spectators. He chooses to act. ■

Ex-theatre head pleads guilty

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Michael Nathanson

With Michael Nathanson's guilty plea to a charge of forgery and partial restitution of the funds he stole, the board of directors of the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre (WJT) has some closure on a sorry chapter in the 27-year-old theatre's history that almost put it out of business.

In the aftermath of his Sept. 2 sentencing, the board said it was "satisfied that justice has been served. While some restitution was made to the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre, it was by no means made whole."

It added: "Our focus now is on the business of the theatre and its bright future under its new artistic director," referring to former Torontonian Ari Weinberg, who was hired last spring.

The WJT hired budding playwright Nathanson as its artistic director and general manager in 2007. In February 2014, it fired him ahead of a police investigation into allegations he had embezzled thousands of dollars from the theatre. It was further alleged he covered up his crime by forging documents to make the WJT's accounts look like they were in order.

As a result of the thefts, the WJT was forced to cancel its last production of the 2013-2014 season and shut down operations for several months.

While its future was in serious doubt, a team of volunteers with community support were able to dig out of the financial hole and move forward.

Following his exposure, Nathanson, a dual Canadian-American citizen, fled the country, resettling in Texas, where he has family. He was arrested in March when he returned to Winnipeg to see his children.

In court, Nathanson, 49, admitted to stealing $65,000 from the non-profit WJT. According to a Sept. 3 report in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, Crown attorney Peter Edgett described how Nathanson had authority over all financial matters, including signing cheques, payroll and financial statements. Over the course of nearly seven years, he began using theatre credit and debit cards to make personal purchases, which he then covered up in financial statements. He also made bank withdrawals that were also hidden.

His embezzlement was exposed when several cheques to actors began to bounce. He reportedly blamed depression, the collapse of his marriage and related financial issues for his actions.

His lawyer, Richard Wolson, told the court his client is undergoing counselling and is" "trying to give back to the community and help others. He is absolutely remorseful," the *Free Press* reported.

Nathanson reportedly made a tearful apology to the theatre, former co-workers and his family and friends. He was given a one-year conditional sentence after pleading guilty to uttering forged documents. He also presented a cheque for $65,000 of the missing money, which the board says is only partial restitution.

Nathanson's conditional sentence includes a nightly curfew of 9 p.m. and an order to abstain from drugs and alcohol. ■

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Jews, Christians, Muslims set to help refugee family

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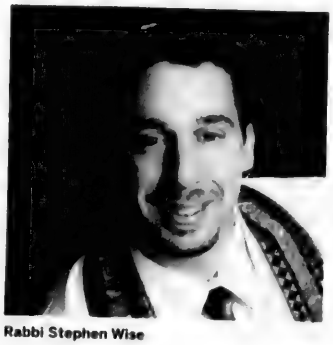
Rabbi Stephen Wise

Shaarei-Beth El Congregation in Oakville, Ont., is joining with local Christians and Muslims to sponsor a family of seven who fled war in Syria and are living in Jordan.

Rabbi Stephen Wise said the partnership is unprecedented in Canada and is a moral response to a crisis situation.

"We know this is an immense task, but we cannot stand by and do nothing," he said.

"All three faiths know it is our obligation to help the needy, one family at a time. We felt this was a unique situation, that [we all] sponsor refugees. We feel this would set an example for other partnerships like this. These are people who need help. It doesn't matter what ethnicity or religion they are."

Rabbi Wise was planning to make a pitch for his congregation's support during the first day of Rosh Hashanah. The three faith groups have agreed to raise more than $30,000 to support the family once they're in Canada. One of them, Maple Grove United Church, is preparing the paperwork to facilitate the family's emigration. The other participant is Canadians in Support of Refugees in Dire Need (CSRDN).

Sandra Onufryk, chair of the church's outreach committee, said the United Church is a sponsorship agreement holder, allowing it to bring refugees to Canada who have been approved by federal authorities. It could take as long as 17 months before the family arrives. The vetting process is extensive, including medical, criminal and terrorist checks, she said, adding the process could be expedited.

Onufryk said the idea for a partnership originated with Aliya Khan, co-founder of CSRDN, and Rev. Morar Murray-Hayes, the presiding minister at Maple Grove. They thought it would "show the world that the three Abrahamic religions could work together in a constructive way," she said.

In meetings with refugee advocacy groups at the ISNA Canada (Islamic Society of North America) mosque in Mississauga, which will host a rally for Syrian refugees Oct. 25, Onufryk learned of the Syrian family now living in Jordan. The family has relatives in Canada who asked for help in bringing them over.

Onufryk said getting Muslims, Christians and Jews to co-operate to help the family "shows that the three faith groups, which had conflict in the past, can work together in Canada to help needy people."

Their partnership has prompted inquiries from others, she added. Representatives of two Catholic churches called on her for more information within a 24-hour span last week, as has a citizens group, which can also sponsor refugees, she said.

Several Toronto shuls are also taking steps separately to support refugee families, including Beth Tikvah Congregation, City Shul and Congregation Darchei Noam. As well, Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom in Montreal and Congregation Machzikei Hadas in Ottawa are planning to do the same.

Despite statements of co-operation between CSRDN, Maple Grove Church and Shaarei-Beth El, an issue cropped up that gave the church and synagogue pause before agreeing to participate in the rally at the ISNA Canada mosque. South of the border in 2007, ISNA was named an unindicted co-conspirator in the Holy Land Foundation case after being linked to efforts to funnel money to Hamas.

As well, two years ago, the Canada Revenue Agency removed the charitable status of ISNA Development Foundation, saying, "The government of Canada... will not tolerate the abuse of the registration system for charities to provide any means of support to terrorism."

Rabbi Wise acknowledged ISNA's U.S. link. "It's a tricky one," he said. "We might not agree with ISNA on everything. I wouldn't partner with organizations that call for the destruction of Israel and support terrorism."

But he knew Khan from their joint participation in the Interfaith Council of Halton. "I feel this kind of issue, helping refugees, can bring us together, rather than drive us apart," he said.

Onufryk said she, too, was "concerned" about the ISNA connection and discussed it with her church colleagues. "We decided the needs of the family in Jordan were... greater than our concerns."

Asked about the mosque's ties to ISNA in the United States, Khan said CSRDN is the sponsoring group. "CSRDN is a Muslim organization with multifaith representation. "We meet at ISNA," she said. ■

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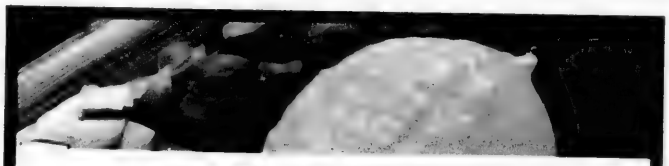

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Temple Sinai Slichot service mixes drama and prayer

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

From left, David Eisner, Colin Mochrie, Debra McGrath and Avery Saltzman perform at Temple Sinai and Harold Green Theatre's Slichot service Sept. 5.
LARRY NICOLS PHOTOGRAPHY

Temple Sinai Congregation of Toronto held a unique Slichot service on Sept. 5 that Rabbi Michael Dolgin, the Reform synagogue's senior rabbi, said can be categorized as "neither show nor shul."

As part of a larger effort to challenge people's assumptions about prayer, Temple Sinai created an innovative Slichot – the series of penitential prayers and liturgy typically begun on the Saturday night preceding Rosh Hashanah and read each night until Yom Kippur – by fusing traditional Jewish writings with Jewish theatrical texts and traditional synagogue music with music one would find in a Jewish theatre production.

"We want to let go of the idea that religion and culture are separate things," Rabbi Dolgin said.

This merging of modern drama and music with standard liturgy was first piloted at Temple Sinai's Slichot service last year, in partnership with the professional, non-profit Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company.

Temple Sinai has had a partnership with the theatre for over five years.

This year, Rabbi Dolgin and Temple Sinai's Cantor Charles Osborne created a fresh program along with Harold Green's co-artistic directors David Eisner (also a member of Temple Sinai) and Avery Saltzman.

The service was held at the Toronto Centre for the Arts and drew a crowd of over 700 people.

Described by Rabbi Dolgin as "a combination of the kind of talents you usually expect from clergy mixed with those you usually expect from theatre performers," the evening featured two cantors –Osborne and the shul's other cantor, Katie Oringel – Rabbi Dolgin and Temple Sinai's Rabbi Daniel Mikelberg, plus four professional actors, three professional singers and a 10-piece orchestra arranged through the Harold Green Theatre.

In addition to traditional liturgy sung or recited responsively by clergy and audience members, the program included a dramatic telling of the story of Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon, a rendition of Bette Midler's song *From a Distance*, a scene from Rich Orloff's play *Can This Marriage be Saved*, about an imagined divorce between God and humanity, and an improvised skit performed by Canadian actor and comedian couple Colin Mochrie and Debra McGrath.

"The idea is that each [element] informed the other. The traditional liturgy gave grounding and roots to the modern cultural elements, and the latter opened up the liturgy and made it accessible," Rabbi Dolgin explained.

He added that the purpose of the night was to give congregants or any interested members of the Jewish community a "chance to prepare for the holidays in a way we believed would be more accessible to people who wouldn't attend shul with regularity," other than on the High Holidays.

Congregational participation was encouraged, and attendees were given prayers to recite in unison throughout the performance.

Temple Sinai has taken this new approach to prayer as a way of appealing to congregants who aren't comfortable with normative services or are looking for different ways to get meaning and spiritual connection from a synagogue experience.

Rabbi Dolgin said the synagogue certainly won't be dispensing with conventional prayer services, but noted that the shul is hoping to work toward enriching other services, like those held on Shabbat and other holidays, with this "new kind of Jewish communal prayer… this mixture of traditional liturgy, teaching and cultural and musical pieces."

He acknowledged that many congregants still want traditional services, but "a lot of people are hungry for [other kinds of] spiritual experiences… We hope the collaboration with the theatre company can help provide that."

Temple Sinai has been asked to share its new approach to prayer at the Union for Reform Judaism's biennial convention to be held in Florida this November.

There, Rabbi Dolgin and other Temple Sinai staff will demonstrate before the several thousand convention delegates a prayer service that combines contemporary Jewish drama and ancient Jewish tradition. ■

UJA campaign already at $30 million, kickoff event told

SHLOMO KAPUSTIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Steve Martin JEN ARRON PHOTOGRAPHS PHOTO

The 2016 campaign for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto has raised $30 million so far, organizers said at the campaign launch.

The announcement received applause from the crowd of more than 2,200 who attended the annual event. This year's edition, held Sept. 10 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, included a bit of everything: veteran comedian Steve Martin headlining the evening, author Douglas Murray contributing Middle East analysis, and a parade of federation lay leaders exploring the meaning of it all. Julie Albert and Stephen Libin co-chaired the campaign launch.

Last year's core campaign raised $56.1 million, Steven Shulman, campaign director and counsel at federation, said in a post-event interview, and supplemental gifts increased the total to more than $60 million. No target has been set for this year, aside from eclipsing last year's result.

The launch coincided with the recent release of federation's strategic plan, which adopted aggressive five-year targets for the city with North America's third-largest federated campaign. "We want to grow the campaign by one-third," said Shulman, "because we feel that reflects what we have in Toronto and the role that Toronto needs to play in federation in the Jewish world."

The increase, he said, will depend on two groups.

"It can be done by growing the number of donors and by those who are already giving gifts understanding the pivotal nature of this organization in the community" and donating commensurately.

One surprising result from preparing the plan, officials said, was a lack of awareness about federation's local contributions.

"One important fact we discovered through these consultations," said Morris Perlis, chair of federation's board, "was that too many people had no idea of UJA's full width and breadth throughout our community and across Israel, and what we do on a daily basis to ensure that Jewish Toronto continues to be a leader among Diaspora communities."

Speakers highlighted the multiple causes that benefit from UJA funds. Felicia Posluns, co-chair of the 2016 campaign, highlighted Jewish Family & Child and other social service agencies, such as Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, which helped her father and other survivors begin new lives after the Shoah.

Shoel Silver, the second campaign co-chair, emphasized overseas efforts, including federation's beneficiaries in Israel, such as an Ethiopian woman who will soon graduate from nursing school courtesy of a federation scholarship, and the city of Sderot, which has absorbed years of rocket attacks from nearby Gaza.

And Ruth Ekstein, chair of UJA 2016 Women's Philanthropy, emphasized local groups that fortify Jewish identity, from Jewish day schools, to Hillel and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, to the PJ Library.

But it was comedy's Renaissance man, the final performer, who occupied the night's spotlight. Spurred by a question-and-answer session with sportscaster Elliotte Friedman, Martin's trademark combination of goofiness and sophisticated one-liners delighted the audience.

At one point, while considering the comedic influence of Jews in Hollywood, he asked rhetorically: "Who's funnier than Mel Brooks?" Friedman, playing the straight man, answered, "Nobody." Martin's mock offence triggered gales of laughter.

Martin's hour-long appearance also showcased some of his non-comedic pursuits. He played the banjo for about 10 minutes and even answered two questions from the audience on the subject. He also discussed Group of Seven painter Lawren Harris and the exhibit of the Canadian's works that he is curating. It will visit the Art Gallery of Ontario after an American tour beginning in October.

British journalist Murray's remarks proved more sobering. The associate director of the Henry Jackson Society, a think-tank, lamented that Israel has become a partisan issue in many countries. He also worried the recent P5+1 agreement with Iran won't thwart Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

"As part of his defence of the [agreement], [U.S.] President [Barack] Obama has claimed that in the event that Iran were to breach the agreement, mechanism will be in place that would trigger the immediate return of sanctions: a sanctions snapback," Murray said. "But in reality, the procedures set out mean that at best, restoring sanctions would take a number of months, and there is no guarantee that this move might not meet with opposition from key international powers." ■

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Liberal Bendayan takes on NDP leader in Outremont

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

If Rachel Bendayan doesn't slay the giant, it won't be for lack of trying.

The 35-year-old lawyer has knocked on 10,000 doors to date, she says, in an effort to return Outremont to the Liberal stronghold it was for decades.

That giant is New Democratic Party leader Tom Mulcair, who has represented the riding since a 2007 byelection and garnered 55 per cent of the vote in 2011, leaving the then Liberal hopeful trailing at 21 per cent.

Bendayan is unbowed. The overriding impression she has from showing up at people's homes in this sprawling, culturally and economically diverse riding is that people want change. "The reaction has been fantastic. I'm very encouraged," she said. "I think it's really important to hear from the constituents I will represent."

Bendayan has been unofficially campaigning since her unopposed nomination in March 2014. She opened her office last June, well before the earlier-than-expected Aug. 2 election call, on Park Avenue, near St. Viateur Street, in the heart of a bustling multicultural microcosm.

Since Jan. 1, she's been on an unpaid sabbatical from law firm Norton Rose Fulbright Canada, where she's practised commercial litigation and international arbitration since 2007 – a mostly male sphere, she noted.

One of the partners is former Tory prime minister Brian Mulroney. "He is supportive of me as a candidate, and thinks a new generation, fresh blood, new ideas are needed. He loves to hear stories from the hustings."

One of her mentors, outgoing Mount Royal Liberal MP Irwin Cotler, also encouraged her to enter the political arena, believing it's time for young people to step up.

As well as the upscale borough of the same name, Outremont encompasses parts of Mile End, Côte des Neiges and downtown Montreal. It has a sizable Jewish population, notably several chassidic and other haredi communities. The riding was her home for eight years until the electoral map was redrawn for this election and she and husband Daniel Hofmann found themselves two blocks outside its boundaries. She grew up in Côte des Neiges.

Mulcair has been noticeably absent in the riding, said Bendayan, who would welcome a debate with him, but so far he's refused.

Despite the challenge, Bendayan said she never considered running anywhere else, although she thought it would be later because she is still building her legal career.

Rachel Bendayan takes part in a "reverse town hall meeting" with MP Irwin Cotler.

She's been active in politics since her law student days at McGill University and, over the past 12 years, in federal politics, including serving on the Liberal party's legal commission and the national board of directors.

She attributes her interest in public life in part to her having been active in the B'nai Brith Youth Organization as a teen – she rose to eastern Canadian president – and, more recently, with the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, a non-partisan group that urges Jews to be active in politics.

The issues raised by residents in the different parts in the riding are often similar, Bendayan says. The most common concerns are the economy and immigration.

She is trying to do politics differently by being more consultative. A campaign is the time to discuss real issues with voters, she believes. In late August, with Cotler, she organized a "reverse town hall" meeting where she invited representatives of several cultural communities to discuss what's on their mind regarding immigration.

Among those on the panel were Max Leiberman of the Jewish community and Mazen Houdeib of the Arab community. Both find immigration too long and complicated, and the citizenship exam in Montreal is only offered on Saturdays, a sore point for Chassidim and other Orthodox Jews.

"The Harper government's immigration policies have led us away from Canada's basic values of openness and has devalued citizenship," said Bendayan, whose parents were born in Morocco.

"Wait times are such that thousands of families have no real hope of being reunited. Added fees mean many cannot afford to immigrate. A lack of service and flexibility has meant certain communities have been shut out of the immigration process altogether," she said. ■

Notice of Special General Meeting
Canadian Magen David Adom for Israel

Take notice that the Special General Meeting of CMDA will be held on
Wednesday, October 7, 2015 - 6:00 p.m., at CMDA Headquarters,
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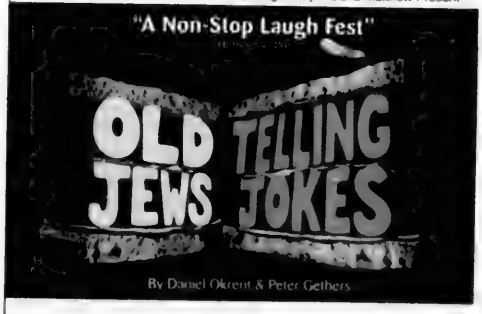

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Mount Royal Liberal hopeful gets prominent local backing

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Liberal Anthony Housefather's bid to become the next MP for Mount Royal has received a major boost, with ringing endorsements from the dean of Montreal city council, Marvin Rotrand, as well as former D'Arcy McGee MNA Lawrence Bergman and Russell Copeman, borough mayor of Côte des Neiges-Notre Dame de Grâce.

A broad spectrum of cultural community, municipal and public school representatives were also on hand to give their support to Housefather at the official opening of his campaign office Sept. 9.

Rotrand, who has represented the Snowdon district for 33 years, said Housefather is "honest, dedicated, competent, progressive – wonderful traits that speak to his potential to fill those big shoes left by [retiring MP] Irwin Cotler."

Rotrand read out the names of a long list of people from the Filipino, Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Chinese, Armenian, Muslim and other communities who are endorsing Housefather. From the Jewish community, he cited Aline Malka of the Sephardi community; Lubavitch Rabbi Mendy Zirkind; David Lisbona, associated with B'nai Brith; and Sid Kronish, president of the Côte St. Luc Senior Men's Club.

Housefather's campaign office is in Côte des Neiges, a highly multicultural area, and gives Housefather visibility outside his natural base in Côte St. Luc and Hampstead.

Housefather, who has been Côte St. Luc mayor for 10 years, also has the backing of English Montreal School Board chair Angela Mancini and all eight Côte St. Luc city councillors, as well as others from Hampstead and Town of Mount Royal.

Rotrand praised Housefather for having rallied a multicultural network around him that reflects the diversity of the riding, and of Canada itself.

Rotrand stressed that a longstanding bond exists between ethnic groups and the Liberal Party because of its traditional support for multiculturalism.

"It was [former prime minister] Pierre Trudeau [Mount Royal's MP for 20 years] who was against the discriminatory law on people of colour immigrating," Rotrand said, to wild cheers.

"The difference between my campaign and that of my opponents in this riding, is that they are trying to get the support of one community," Housefather said.

Mount Royal Liberal candidate Anthony Housefather, centre, with Lawrence Bergman, left, and Marvin Rotrand JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

"We are working for the support of every community."

This was an apparent reference mainly to Conservative candidate Robert Libman, who has been emphasizing Prime Minister Stephen Harper's "unequivocal" support for Israel in his campaign.

New Democratic candidate Mario Jacinto Rimbao, who is prominent in the Filipino community, was campaigning a block away outside the Plamondon metro station, along with Jimmy Gutman, president of the Mount Royal NDP riding association.

Libman was at a seniors' residence delivering Rosh Hashanah food baskets, prepared at the Mada Community Centre.

Bergman, who served 20 years in the National Assembly, called Housefather "a man of honour and great integrity, tremendous competence and disciplined in his work... He loves all Canadians, whether they were born here or chose to come to our shores, no matter their colour, creed, religion or country of origin."

Bergman said he "will work hard to get my friends and family to vote for him, too."

It was recalled that Housefather fought more than a decade ago for the de-merger of Côte St. Luc, Hampstead and Montreal West from the new island-wide city, while Libman, then Côte St. Luc mayor, was castigated for reneging on his promise to support de-merger. "He ran to get elected on that promise and did the exact opposite," said Housefather.

Housefather also invoked the name of the elder Trudeau for championing the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, and noted that he himself had spent his public career fighting for minority rights.

"Immigration is a richness, not something to be afraid of," said Housefather. ■

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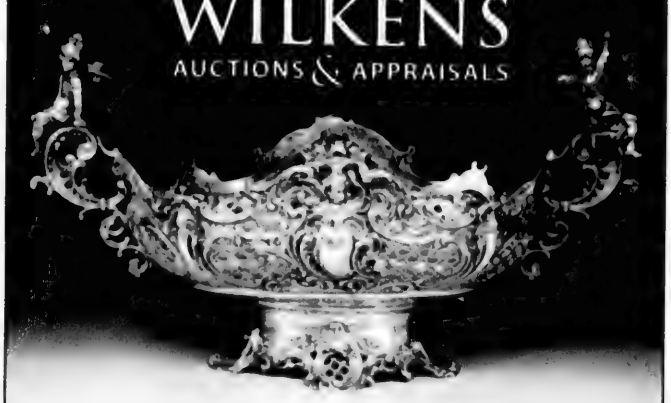

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CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK

Refugees: a Jewish issue comes to the fore

Daniel Wolgelerenter

A quintessentially Jewish issue has dominated the news and become a prominent election issue ever since the picture of three-year-old Alan Kurdi lying dead in the Mediterranean surf generated headlines worldwide earlier this month.

For many, the painful image has crystallized the ongoing question of what the world ought to be doing about the human fallout from Syria's bloody civil war, which so far has killed 250,000 people and created a staggering four million refugees.

It may be the Conservatives' misfortune the photo has galvanized Canadians in the midst of an election campaign, and they've been caught flatfooted on terrain that's traditionally been friendlier to their rivals. Both the Liberals and the NDP have called for Canada to quickly admit thousands more refugees, despite criticism that this won't solve the problem and comes with security risks if they can't be properly vetted.

This story is almost as central to the Canadians psyche as it is to the Jewish one, since many of us have come here fleeing persecution, poverty or both.

We Jews feel the issue in our bones. We were born a nation of refugees, as the Passover Exodus story attests, and our history is one of both wandering and exile. Whether it's been at the hands of Babylonian soldiers, Roman centurions, Spanish Inquisitors or Nazi storm troopers, we know what it means to be uprooted.

Many Canadian Jews have an intensely personal connection to the issue, being Holocaust survivors or children of survivors, or having lost family members in the Shoah less than 75 years ago. We also have a collective memory of Canada's "none is too many" Jewish immigration policy of the time, and of the MS St. Louis being turned away from our shores, only to return to Europe, where more than a quarter of its 937 Jewish passengers perished in the Holocaust.

It's therefore no surprise synagogues are doing their part in response to the Syrian crisis.

Even before the issue became daily news, Congregation Darchei Noam in Toronto pledged to sponsor a Kurdish Syrian family's immigration to Canada. And since the problem took on greater urgency, the City Shul and Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Toronto have decided to do the same, while Shaarei-Beth El Congregation in Oakville, Ont., has publicized its efforts – begun last April in partnership with a local mosque and a church – to sponsor a Syrian family.

On the policy front, the Jewish Refugee Action Network (JRAN), established in 2013, has been critical of the government's changes to refugee law, which it says, "place [them] at risk and disrupt Canada's humanitarian values and traditions." Founder Arthur Bielfeld, rabbi emeritus of Toronto's Temple Emanu-El, says JRAN is "rooted in… the ancient [Jewish] summons to welcome the stranger."

The group made some initial waves when it decried new federal measures that limit refugees' access to free health care and designate certain jurisdictions as "safe countries," which, by definition, don't generate refugees, a move that particularly affected Roma being persecuted in Hungary.

Until now, JRAN's efforts have, unfortunately, had limited traction, even in the Jewish community. Its narrative has taken a back seat with mainstream Jewish groups, whose advocacy in recent years has become increasingly (and often understandably) focused on Israel, to the detriment of other priorities.

The image of one dead toddler, however, seems to be changing the landscape.

Is there an easy answer to the problem? One has to agree with Prime Minister Stephen Harper when he says there isn't, and making partisan hay of a human tragedy is distasteful, to be sure.

But Harper's initial choked-up reaction to Alan Kurdi's death, and subsequent reassertion of his government's anti-terror bona fides isn't the kind of leadership many Canadians are seeking. A Postmedia poll released last week found roughly half disapprove of his approach and want to see a dramatic increase in refugee resettlement.

After stabilizing in the polls and despite inroads they've made with immigrant communities, the Conservatives are losing the thread of this story and appear to be suffering for it. If they don't find the narrative soon, the issue – along with a faltering economy, the Duffy scandal and 10 years in power – could irreversibly solidify an appetite for change among voters, Jews and non-Jews alike. ■

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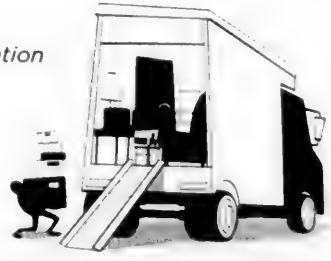

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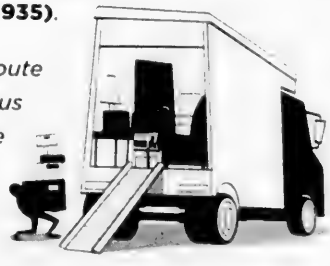

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Bacterial infection costs young boy his limbs

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Last May, Ethan Faria celebrated his first birthday as a healthy, thriving child who had just taken his first steps.

Today, Ethan is fighting for his life in the ICU at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. He has had both of his legs amputated below the knee, his right hand amputated below the wrist, and all of the fingers on his left hand – except for one – amputated.

Ethan contracted a rare bacterium, Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib), the most common cause of bacterial meningitis. Hib is an infection of the cerebral and spinal cord fluids. For Ethan, it led to disseminated intravascular coagulation – a condition in which blood clots form in the body's small blood vessels, cutting off blood supply to organs – and skin necrosis.

Parents Rachel and Humberto Faria were told to prepare for the worst.

Rachel's longtime friend, Anita Evans, share a bond, as both have Israeli mothers. The friends converse together in Hebrew and have older children of the same age. Evans, who along with another long-time friend, Sara Gregory, spoke to *The CJN* about their friend Rachel, baby Ethan's illness, and efforts to raise funds for the family.

On July 24, Ethan developed a fever that quickly escalated. A visit to his family doctor revealed pneumonia and bronchitis.

"Ethan was immediately transferred by ambulance to Sick Kids. Within 30 minutes, his lips and fingertips turned purple, and everything started to unravel," Evans said.

"The doctors told Rachel and Humberto that they should prepare themselves: Ethan might die. If he made it through the next six hours, he had a chance, but every hour was crucial."

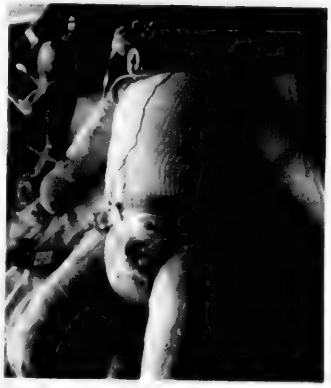
Ethan went into septic shock as the infection ravaged his body, and doctors pumped him with antibiotics to keep him alive.

A few days later, it was discovered the bacteria Ethan had contracted was one he had been vaccinated for.

Once the cause of severe illness, Hib cases have become rare since a vaccination to protect against it came into wide use in the mid-1980s. Vaccinated children are protected against Hib in combination vaccinations that also other cover diseases such as polio, pertussis, diphtheria and tetanus.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Hib can cause severe infection, mostly in infants and children younger than five years of age, and can lead to lifelong disability and even death.

Ethan had his two-, four- and six-month vaccinations and was due for his booster shot at 18 months.



Ethan Faria after skin graft surgery
RACHEL FARIA PHOTO

The bacterium spreads from person to person by direct contact or coughing and sneezing.

"Hib is something Ethan picked up three to five days before he took ill. Rachel wants answers. How can this happen in Canada – in Toronto – in this day and age?" Evans asked.

"Rachel doesn't want another parent to ever go through this, ever."

Ethan withstood what is hoped to be his last surgery during the first week of September, marking the fifth major surgery he has had in the last month.

"In the first exploratory surgery, the doctors removed all of his skin on his legs and his arms. By doing that, there is no skin to heal, so the last two surgeries he has gone through have been grafts – little pieces of skin from his back, his shoulders and his belly – taking the skin from that area and grafting it onto what's left of his legs and his arms with the hope it will heal and he will have skin again on that part of his body," Gregory said.

Evans and Gregory have started an online fundraising campaign for the family. Taking care of Ethan will be a full-time job, as he'll need years of therapy and rehabilitation, as well as to learn how to use prosthetics.

"We set a goal of $50,000. You can get by for a year on $20,000, so if we can raise $50,000, then we can give Rachel two to three years at home with Ethan," Gregory said.

Word has spread through social media. "People just took to the cause. I have had people reach out with personal messages and donations from as far away as Israel, Australia, Austria, the U.S. and Portugal," Gregory said. ■

Visit www.gofundme.com/ethanfaria to donate.

BDS not a Jewish issue, it's a human rights issue: panelist

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Kasim Hafeez grew up in Britain, the child of Pakistani immigrants, where he was immersed from a young age in anti-Semitism, and Israel was commonly demonized.

He made the journey from radical Islam to his current position as outreach co-ordinator for Christians United for Israel. In that capacity, he argues the case for the Jewish state before many hostile audiences on campus. He has defended Israel against the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement, and from his perspective, "Israel is not just a Jewish issue. It's a human rights issue about freedom, democracy and doing what's right."

Hafeez was part of a Sept. 9 panel discussing anti-Israel rhetoric and anti-Semitism on North American university campuses, at an event sponsored by StandWithUs Canada, a non-profit pro-Israel education and advocacy group, at Wychwood Barns in Toronto.

The evening included the airing of a film, *Crossing the Line 2*, a documentary that looked at heated anti-Israel and anti-Semitic agitation on campus. The film highlighted troubling episodes from mostly American campuses in which anti-Israel advocacy has morphed into anti-Semitism, where opponents of the prevailing anti-Israel narrative have been bullied at public events and where Jewish students face a hostile atmosphere.

Fellow panelist Abe Haak agreed with Hafeez that the potential implications of the BDS movement far exceed its impact on the State of Israel.

In fact, said Haak, a lecturer at New York University, the BDS movement will likely have little impact on Israel itself. The country has faced and overcome far greater challenges. But French Jews are terrified. British Jews are scared. Swedish Jews can't walk safely in some city streets. And if Jews in North America ignore the problem, they may well be next, he warned.

For advocates of BDS, "the stated objective is Israel, but you are the real target," he said, adding it may not affect the current generation of Jews, but it will affect their children and grandchildren.

"This is a war," he continued. "They're out for blood, and we must defeat them, very much like the Israel Defence Forces does in the field."

Joining Hafeez and Haak as panelists were Asaf Romirowksy, executive director of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East, and Zina Rakhamilova, StandWithUs Canada's campus co-ordinator. They were introduced by MC Barbara Kay, a *National Post* columnist. Meryle Kates, executive director of StandWithUs Canada, hosted the event.

Asaf Romirowsky, left, and Kasim Hafeez

Romirowsky said pro-Israel groups need to create a simple Zionist narrative, a sort of "elevator speech" that can be presented succinctly and makes the case for Israel. He suggested one that stresses the ancient Jewish connection to the land.

Rakhamilova said she has travelled the country to equip students with the tools necessary to address anti-Israel rhetoric on campus. StandWithUs has helped defeat divestment proposals on some campuses, and it employs social media to spread a "positive, pro-Israel message."

Haak, who was born in Jordan to Palestinian parents, said he has, over the course of 37 years, moved from enmity with Israel toward admiration. He said he regularly addresses campus audiences, which he described as the new battlefield.

The BDS movement "is organized. I never thought that Arabs would out-organize Jews," he quipped, adding it relies on a "semi-professional international organization" that provides media kits and even legal help. It has infiltrated various organizations "before we even woke up."

What's most remarkable is its ability to create coalitions of unlikely partners, including gay and lesbian groups, Communists and Islamic fundamentalists.

"You have to move out of the shtetl," he told the audience. "This is not only a Jewish issue... It's a world issue."

Haak advised Jews to build their own coalitions and make the case for Israel when they meet friends and colleagues.

But while he discusses the issues with a variety of people, he doesn't speak to Palestinian and Muslim audiences. "I don't think bridge-building is possible now," he said.

Hafeez, however, said, "I enjoy speaking to hostile crowds. We're not there to spread hatred, like the other side. We're not anti-anything. At the end of the day, truth and justice are on my side." ■

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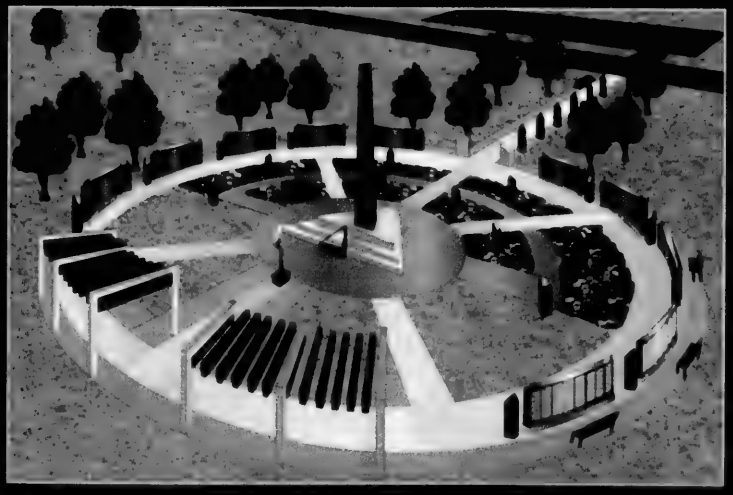

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
SEPTEMBER 17, 2015

Rally held in support of Yazidis under attack by ISIS

More than 5,000 killed and over 7,400 young people have been abducted, forced to convert to Islam and sold as sex slaves

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Renanah Goldhar, right, dressed as a Yazidi slave, stands with other demonstrators at a Toronto rally in solidarity with Yazidi victims of ISIS genocide. At left, another rallier demonstrates across the street from the U.S. Consulate. PAUL LUNGEN PHOTOS

In a display of street theatre designed to grab the attention of passersby, Renanah Goldhar donned the chador-like garb forced on Yazidi slave women and lamented the fate such women have endured at the hands of the Islamic State (ISIS).

Standing across the street from the U.S. Consulate on University Avenue in Toronto, Goldhar spoke in the first person and told the stories they are unable to tell, describing being raped, tortured and immolated at the hands of Islamic warriors fighting for ISIS.

Goldhar, a Jewish woman who said she could not sit silently while Yazidis experienced genocide, was one of several speakers to address a Sept. 9 rally in solidarity with Yazidis, a Middle Eastern people that traces its heritage back 6,700 years, and to support a rabbis' march in Washington, D.C., the same day that protested the Iran nuclear deal.

About 40 to 50 people, largely from the Jewish and Yazidi communities, took part in the rally, many carrying posters with a photo of a young Yazidi girl being sold in a market as a sex slave.

ISIS and Iran are two sides of the same coin in which Jews, Yazidis, Christians and other minorities are under attack by radical Islamists, organizers said.

After telling the story of Yazidi women forced to convert to Islam, sold into slavery and murdered, Goldhar said, "They won't get their pictures on the front pages as refugees." That was a reference to the outpouring of sympathy for a Syrian toddler, Alan Kurdi, who drowned off the coast of Turkey when the small boat he and his family were on, trying to get to Greece, capsized.

Similar frustration at the short shrift being given Yazidis was voiced by Mirza Ismail, a spokesman for the group Yezidi Human Rights Organization International. "More than 5,000 Yazidis have been killed, beheaded, slaughtered, buried alive, but the media doesn't care," he told *The CJN*.

"We know we don't have equal rights in the Middle East and equal rights [in] the international community, as well as the international media," he added.

Addressing the rally, Ismail said more than 7,400 young Yazidis have been abducted, forced to convert to Islam and sold as sex slaves. Others are being trained as suicide bombers, "and the international community is silent."

He called on the government of Canada and the international community to intervene by creating a protected autonomous region where Yazidis can be safe.

Steve Maman, the Montreal businessman who gained international attention as a modern-day Oskar Schindler, said he was merely "a guy from Montreal who decided to do something."

To date, he said, he has helped rescue 130 Yazidis from the hands of ISIS sympathizers.

He pointed to Morocco, the land of his birth, as a place where Jews and Muslims have lived peacefully together.

He said his Jewish, Moroccan and Canadian heritage prompted him to found CYCI – The Liberation of Christian and Yazidi Children of Iraq. He likened the situation facing Yazidis to the crisis that Jews faced 70 years ago in Europe. But today, he said, no one can say they didn't know. With instant information through social media, "there are no delays in the information. The excuses that let six million Jews die cannot be used today."

The Yazidis, he said, are being treated horribly. Referring to those killed and made into slaves, he said, "They're being treated like cattle. They're being killed every day without their souls leaving their bodies."

Maman praised Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Defence and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney for "standing for truth" and supporting the Yazidi people with $140 million in humanitarian aid.

Goldhar criticized the Jewish community for failing to adequately respond to the Yazidi crisis.

"We the Jewish People have stood by while a genocide has happened and shame on us. The heroes are young Yazidi girls who have nothing but their hearts and souls. They've said kill us, rather than succumb to ISIS. We don't have one ounce of their dignity or honour. Shame on us in the Jewish community," Goldhar said.

The rally was sponsored by Yezidi Human Rights Organization-International, the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research, and Canadian Jews and Friends for Yazidis. ■

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Newspaper exhibit a window on old Jewish Hamilton

ABIGAIL CUKIER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

An upcoming exhibit will give visitors a look at Jewish life in Hamilton in the 1930s and 1940s, showcasing artifacts from Hamilton's once-thriving Yiddish-language newspaper. The exhibit, *The Jewish Voice of Hamilton*, spotlights this publication and explores the dynamic life of the city through the lens of its publisher, Henry Balinson.

For Balinson's daughter, Goldie Leibman, who was collating printing jobs in her father's print shop at age five, it's a glimpse back into her childhood.

"These items have brought back a lot of very happy memories that I had forgotten. I realized this was the happiest times of our lives," she said.

"I was born during the Great Depression, and like most families, we struggled. We lived in the apartment over the printing plant, and the whole family would go downstairs and fold carefully and lick the stamps and address labels. It was really fun, and I felt very important at the time."

The exhibit, at the Rose and Phil Rosenshein Museum at Beth Jacob Synagogue, features items on display for the first time, including editions of the newspaper, photographs, family memorabilia, letterpress printing artifacts and oral history recordings, all part of the Balinson Family Archive. Advertisements for local businesses (some still active today), local politicians and appeals to aid the Red Cross war effort offer a further window into Hamilton.

"Henry Balinson wrote from the heart, reporting on the activities of the city, commenting on the impact of the war and providing a perspective many other Jewish immigrants of the time would have shared," said Wendy Schneider, co-chair of the Rose and Phil Rosenshein Museum.

"The Balinson archive is of historical interest because it provides a window into a culture that has now largely vanished and offers insights into the craft of letter-press printing."

In 1911 at age 24, Balinson immigrated to Canada from Russia, where he had worked as a typesetter. He later started the International Press on King Street West and published the *Jewish Voice of Hamilton*. An educated and engaged man, the newspaper served as an outlet for his opinions and observations, including his column, *Mein shpatsir iber Hamilton* (My stroll around Hamilton). Balinson used this space to deliver commentary on Jewish Hamilton and garnered much positive and critical feedback from readers.

Henry Balinson at his print shop in the 1930s

In addition to publishing the *Jewish Voice*, International Press attracted business from other organizations because of its typesetting services in languages including Russian, Ukrainian and Hungarian.

Leibman credits her mother, Sarah, with being the quiet "backbone" of the family, providing comfort, support and delicious home-cooked meals.

Leibman and her siblings Morley, Robert, Alex and Norman helped around the shop. But in 1925, Alex, who was 24 and a Canadian Air Force wireless air gunner, was killed in an air raid on the island of Malta. After this, Balinson stopped publishing the newspaper, and Morley took over the printing business.

"Publication stopped, and our whole life turned very sad. Mom and dad never recovered from it. Our whole family never recovered," said Leibman, who now lives in Toronto.

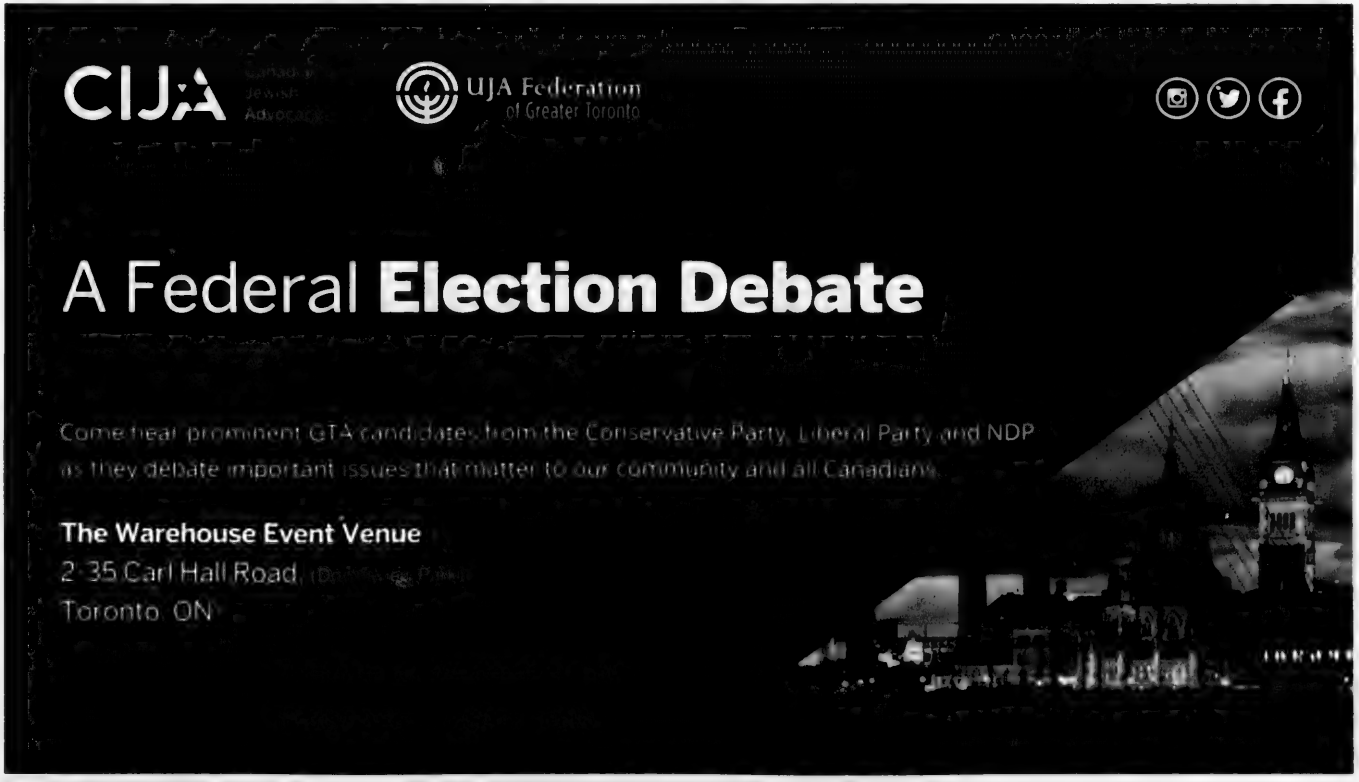
Balinson died in 1961 at age 75.

Leibman is proud to share her family's legacy with the public through this exhibit. "I didn't know the significance of the newspaper," Leibman said. "It's now a piece of history, and I was part of it."

The family-friendly official opening of *The Jewish Voice of Hamilton* is Sunday, Sept. 20, 10 a.m. to noon, and will feature guest speakers and children's activities.

It will run for six months and is open during synagogue office hours, with group tours by appointment. ■

For more information, visit www.beth-jacobsynagogue.ca, or email Wendy Schneider at wendyschnei@gmail.com.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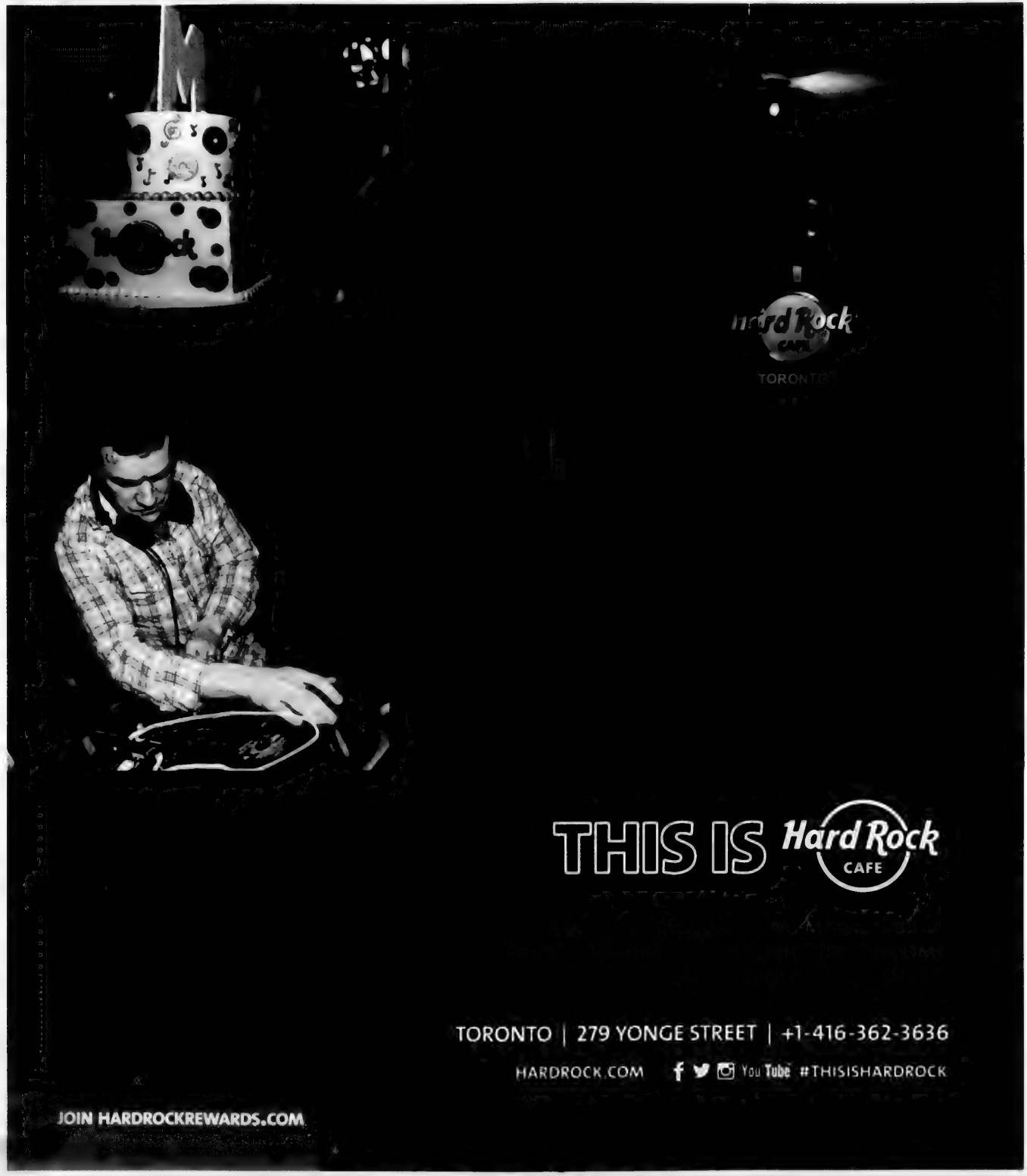
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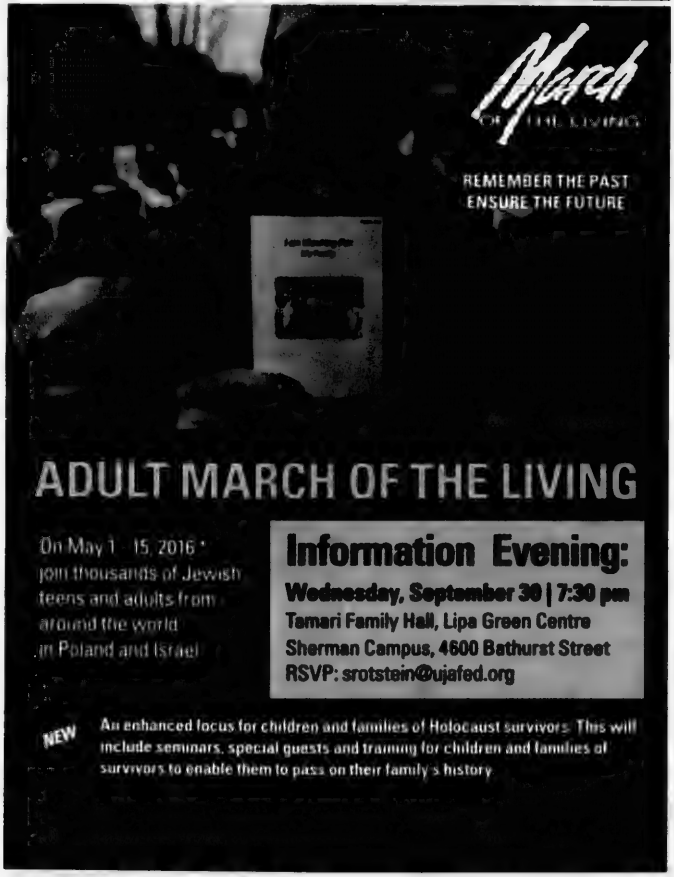
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Grandmother to climb Kilimanjaro for charity

Helen Silverman with her grandchildren

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Thornhill resident Helen Silverman had been trying to do something "great," as she put it, every month in the year leading up to her 60th birthday, but she wasn't sure how to mark the milestone birthday itself, which falls Oct. 10.

When a friend suggested Silverman join her in October on a charity climb of Mt. Kilimanjaro to raise money for Jerusalem-based Shalva, the Association for Mentally and Physically Disabled Children in Israel, Silverman, a mother of three and grandmother of three, thought it was the perfect fit.

Though her friend ended up having to back out of the trip, Silverman remained determined to go.

"It's a way to celebrate my health in fitness in the process of taking care of others... It's going to be a challenge, but it's one I've chosen for myself. If I have a fraction of the drive and spirit of the kids [that Shalva helps], I'll be able to do it," Silverman said enthusiastically.

On Oct. 18, she'll join a team of about 30 Jews primarily from the United Kingdom and Israel on the eight-day, 5,895-metre trek up to the mountain's summit. Each participant has committed to raising a minimum of the equivalent of $10,000 (Cdn) for Shalva, which provides care and services to more than 500 children and youth with disabilities regardless of ethnicity or background.

Shalva is headquartered in Jerusalem but serves people throughout Israel, explained Gaby Hirsch, chief executive of British Friends of Shalva and the climb's co-ordinator.

Hirsch said Shalva is in the process of building a new $47-million (US) national centre in Jerusalem that will be a place for infants, children and young adults with special needs to receive treatment and access educational and recreational opportunities.

She noted she initially thought the trek, the first of its kind for Shalva, would only be attended by people from the United Kingdom, but word spread, and the group of participants is now largely split between Israelis and Brits, plus a few Canadians.

Silverman said she's raised half of the targeted amount so far from individual donors and will soon begin asking companies for support.

"I've been telling my friends I don't want birthday cards or for them take me out for lunch for my birthday. If they want to celebrate me, [sponsoring my climb] is the way to do it," she said.

Though she's always been active, Silverman knows the climb will require serious endurance, and that reduced oxygen levels caused by high altitudes will likely be a challenge.

She described her training regimen so far as fairly "eclectic."

To break in her hiking boots, she's been wearing them on excursions to the grocery store, or out for a walk and in addition to doing some running, she's been practising yoga five days a week as way to "get into the right headspace" for the trek.

"People say it's a mental challenge as much as it is a physical challenge. Yoga also helps with flexibility, and I'll be sleeping on the ground in a tent for eight nights. Plus, there are no toilets, so I've got to practice my squat," Silverman laughed.

As far as she knows, she's going to be the oldest woman on the trip, but not the oldest person: she has heard that a 69-year-old man is participating.

"I'm used to be the oldest woman doing things," Silverman mused.

She said that while her family and friends are extremely proud of her, none wanted to join her on the trek.

Still, she enthused: "It's kind of cool when you go and do something like this and don't know a soul. It really lets you connect in a way you otherwise wouldn't." ■

Event raises funds for film on Montreal art dealer

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In 2008, a U.S. court ordered the return of the 19th-century painting *The Girl from the Sabine Mountains* to its rightful owner: the estate of the prominent Montreal art dealer, Max Stern.

The German-born Stern had been a successful art dealer in Dusseldorf, but the Nazis forced him to close his gallery in 1937. He ended up selling some 200 European masterpieces at bargain prices.

The Girl from the Sabine Mountains, by Franz Xaver Winterhalter, is one of those paintings. Its restitution set a precedent for other claimants of stolen art, because the court equated the forced liquidation of the paintings to theft, according to Willi Korte, a German-born, American art crimes investigator dedicated to finding art looted by the Third Reich.

Korte was instrumental in retrieving the Winterhalter work. He and Clarence Epstein, head of the Max Stern Art Restitution Project (MSARP), were guest speakers at an intimate reception for the project held Sept. 3 by Canadian Friends of Hebrew University of Jerusalem (CFHU) at the Toronto home of Peter Cavanagh and Andrea Wood. Fifty people attended.

Hebrew U, along with Concordia and McGill universities in Montreal, are the beneficiaries of the Max Stern estate. Stern, who died in 1987 with no immediate heirs, settled in Montreal after World War II and, as owner of the Dominion Gallery, became one of Canada's most important art dealers and collectors.

Epstein, senior director of urban and cultural affairs at Concordia, and Korte, a lawyer and historian, are featured in the documentary, *Stolen*, which follows Stern's rise from war refugee to Canadian art luminary. The film also uncovers his early life history in Dusseldorf, which he kept secret, and the contemporary search for his lost masterpieces.

The recent CFHU event was an opportunity to enlighten people about the murky world of plundered art and to interest potential donors in funding *Stolen* so it can be completed. The film, an initiative of the MSARP, CFHU and Concordia, will benefit Hebrew U and the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism.

Stolen is directed by Phyllis Ellis and produced by Henry Less of HLP+Partners. Sissy Federer, Andrea Wood, Susan McArthur and Robin Turack are the executive producers and project fundraisers.

Korte, known as the "Indiana Jones of the art world" regaled his audience with stories from his years of sleuthing. In his early career as a Nazi war crimes investigator, he gained expertise in archival research.

Clarence Epstein, left, and Willi Korte
BARBARA SILVERSTEIN PHOTO

He worked closely with the World Jewish Congress in investigating Holocaust-era assets held illegally in Swiss banks, and exposing the Nazi war record of Kurt Waldheim, former Austrian president and secretary general of the United Nations.

Korte's foray into stolen art began in the early1990s with the recovery of the Quedlinburg treasures, jewelled religious objects and Christian manuscripts worth an estimated $250 million (US). They had been taken from a cave during World War II.

By examining military records, Korte discovered the cave had been guarded by U.S. forces when the priceless objects disappeared. He eventually named an American culprit.

Korte said he used these same skills to locate Stern's missing art when he began working with the MSARP in 2002.

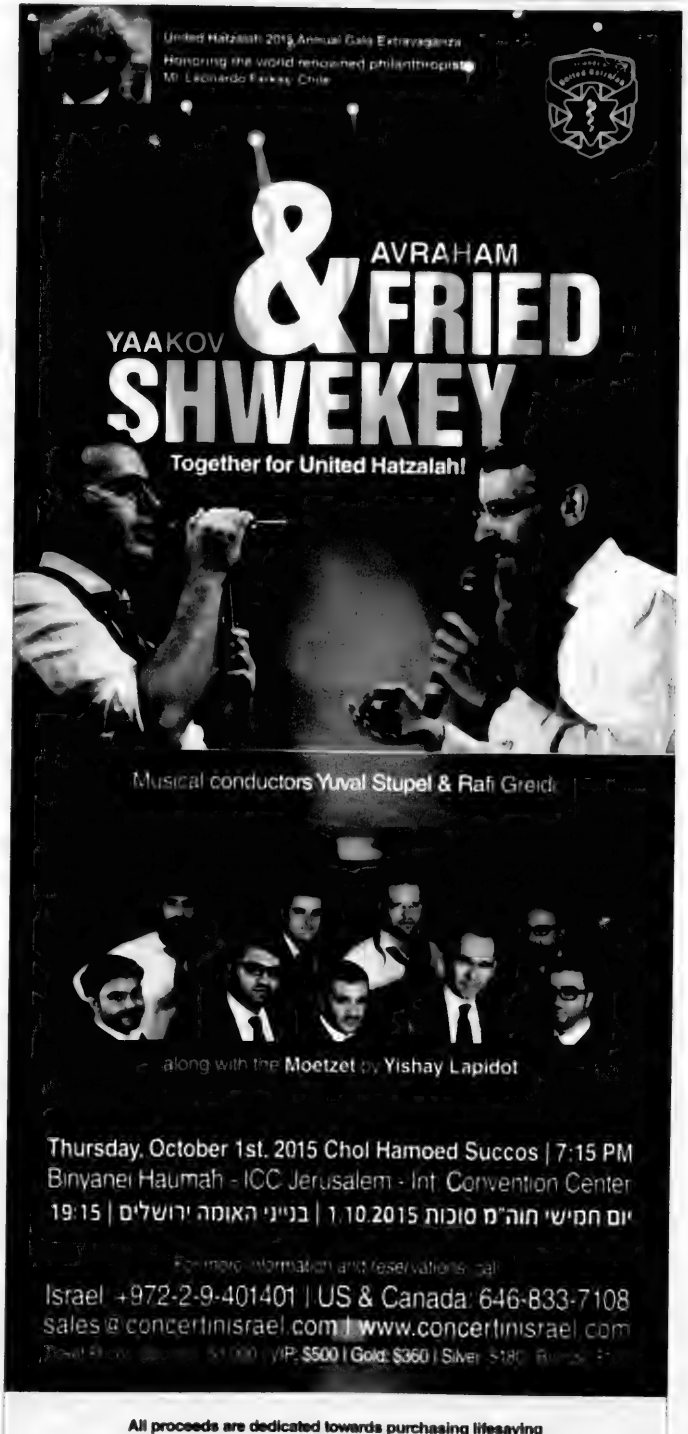
He learned that Stern had lived in Dusseldorf, a city where the Gestapo had kept thorough files on its residents. Records from the cultural authorities pointed to "a narrative of persecution," Korte said.

"In late August of 1935, a letter indicated that Max was not qualified to own a gallery, because he was not Aryan. He was told to liquidate the gallery in 1937."

Korte said U.S. courts are very supportive, but his mission is more challenging in Europe. When Korte found a Stern painting in Italy, the gallery refused to relinquish the work. Ironically, the painting appeared at a recent exhibition in the United States, where it is being held until the dispute over ownership is litigated.

The Girl from the Sabine Mountains, one of the 12 paintings recovered from Stern's 1937 collection, showed up at a small auction house in Rhode Island. An MSARP researcher noticed the sale of the painting through a link with eBay, Korte recounted. "When we spotted the painting we made a claim." ■

For more information on Stolen, *visit http://www.stolendocumentaryfilm.com/#!the-film/c22j5.*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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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Yom Kippur: what a 25-hour fast does to your body

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Those who fast on Yom Kippur are familiar with the discomfort associated with depriving themselves of food and drink – to say nothing of a nice, hot shower – especially during the last leg of the 25-hour fast.

Marni Wasserman, a certified natural chef and a culinary holistic nutritionist, spoke to *The CJN* about the effects that a 25-hour fast can have on a typical healthy adult.

She says the first eight to 10 hours should pass without any physical discomfort. "They'll go to sleep, wake up, but then, normally, people's bodies are gearing up for breakfast or coffee or whatever their morning routine is."

That's when the problems start.

Let's take a closer look at how different parts of the body react to going a full day without food and water.

Head: As the day progresses, you might start to feel dizzy, light-headed, and lethargic. A lot of that comes at the end of the day, right before dinner is usually eaten. "Headaches can also be a big part of it, depending on what's usually in your diet," Wasserman says. "For sure, a coffee drinker is going to feel that. There will be a drop in blood pressure. You'll be foggy."

Muscles: "Your muscles are going to start breaking down glucose and start using that for energy," she says, "but you're not going to atrophy or lose muscle mass in 25 hours."

Stomach: How you eat on Erev Yom Kippur can play a role in how you'll feel during the fast, Wasserman warns.

"People tend to overeat. I would be cautious of this," she says. "No one wants to be bloated or uncomfortable. Eating too much of heavy foods like meats and desserts wouldn't be recommended the night before."

She adds: "I would keep it lighter, easier to digest, still well-rounded and balanced, but more carb-heavy, because your body is going to use mostly carbohydrates for energy the next day. That's a free pass to eat lots of carbs."

Overall, she says, "your stomach will shrink a little. You might feel a little acidy, have acid reflux or just feel tightness and maybe a little internal pressure.

Eyes: "If a person is really dehydrated – if they did not drink enough the day before the fast – they can definitely get dizzy and light-headed, to a point that it can affect their vision," Wasserman says.

Heart: Fasting can slow down your heart rate, Wasserman notes. "In some cases, it can speed it up if people get anxious about the fact that they're not eating. But typically, blood pressure is going to drop a little and it's going to slow things down a bit."

Extremities: "When you're not eating, you've got nothing to burn, so you may feel colder in your extremities – your hands, your feet – they're probably going to feel colder," Wasserman says. "Depending on how much a person's blood sugar has dropped, they can also start to feel some numbness, and they can get the shakes."

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OPINION

Who ought to be a Jew?

Michael Diamond

In a recent edition of *The CJN*, Rabbi Dow Marmur shared the evolution of his thinking regarding the acceptance of patrilineal descent as a means to define who is a Jew.

A letter writer named Ezra Franken disagreed with Rabbi Marmur, suggesting it would be "fairer" if we all adhered to the "universally accepted" determination of matrilineal descent.

The truth is, matrilineal descent is not "universally accepted," given that most of the Reform world, and many in the secular world, accept patrilineal descent. And there's good reason for that: intermarriage rates in the United States are skyrocketing and on a trajectory to rise even higher. Canada isn't far behind.

Ultimately, the debate over who is a Jew is both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is to maintain as Jews as many of the children of intermarriages as possible. The opportunity is to welcome into our "tribe" as many Jews by choice as possible through conversion. And there are several related issues, too, including the question of conversions performed by non-Orthodox rabbis, the validity of which are not currently accepted by the Orthodox world.

One of the beautiful things about Judaism is our ability to facilitate – indeed, encourage – free and critical thinking. Leaving aside the great value of that attribute in our daily lives, it has also spawned multiple approaches to "being Jewish" in the Diaspora.

Some would argue that by offering choice, we have diluted the religion and weakened the global Jewish community. I would argue, however, that by offering choice, we have encouraged millions to remain Jewish in a secular world that would otherwise have swallowed up a majority of Diaspora Jewry.

You need only look to Israel, where the ranks of the secular have grown dramatically, to see the impact of minimal choice when it comes to worship. There, it's a problem, but not an existential one, because all Israelis wake up every day in a Jewish state. But in a secular Diaspora, that lack of choice in how one chooses to "be Jewish" could lead to a dramatic reduction in the number of people who identify as Jewish, support Jewish causes and advocate for Israel.

There's no doubt in my mind that the impact of these "Who is a Jew" questions is potentially catastrophic to the unity of the Jewish People. Marriages of Jews to non-Jews or to Jews who have converted outside the Orthodox rabbinate are going to not only continue, but grow in number. To the extent that a significant and important part of the Jewish world excludes children of Jewish fathers from "the tribe," and to the extent that Orthodox rabbis, with the presumed support of their congregations, continue to refuse to recognize the validity of conversions conducted by non-Orthodox rabbis, we are going to seriously challenge the fabric of our global Jewish community.

Two examples to make the point: if I'm a male Jew, identify as a Jew, practise Judaism and raise my child as a Jew, do we not want my child to be accepted as a Jew in order to add one more to our tiny community? And if not, how am I to respond to my Orthodox fellow Jews who reject my own offspring?

Similarly, if I, a male Jew, have chosen to marry a woman who is a Jew by choice, properly converted by a non-Orthodox rabbi, and we build a Jewish home and raise our children as Jews, how are we and our friends and family going to react if our children are not accepted as being Jewish by that same important segment of the Jewish world?

I am worried. We are in the middle stages of a simmering conflict that will either split the Jewish world or help to unite us. In the end, only the ability of the Orthodox world to recognize this, and to modify its thinking, will save us. ■

Michael Diamond is a business consultant, entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist. He is involved extensively in Jewish and non-Jewish community life and sits on or chairs several boards and committees of a number of non-profit organizations.

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Shuls may need to look at alternate income sources

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Vancouver's Congregation Beth Israel has done this for years, suggesting members donate two per cent of their pre-tax income, with a ceiling of $4,800, says executive director Shannon Etkin. While some synagogues ask for verification of incomes, Beth Israel does not.

"We're trying to be welcome and open to people if they want to be part of this congregation. Finances shouldn't be a part of that," he said.

Other synagogues are investigating what they call a sustaining or voluntary model. The synagogue calculates its annual budget, figures out the per capita cost to members and then suggests they pay that amount.

The beauty is that not only does it lead to greater transparency about synagogue finances, it also gives potential members the flexibility they need without the embarrassment of pleading their case before a committee. The overwhelming fear, of course, is that not enough money will be raised.

So far, Mael says, the few North American synagogues that have tried this have brought in about the same revenues as with the traditional model. In some cases, nervous administrators and presidents have asked a few deep-pocketed members to guarantee that if not enough is raised, they will make up the difference.

Toronto's Beth David Synagogue has embarked on a hybrid approach, said president Barry Levine. In addition to its regular fees of $2,200 for a family, last year it told members that the full cost of running the Conservative shul is $2,900 per family and let them choose which amount to pay.

Last year, 31 families paid the higher amount, and Levine expects that with some promotion of the new undertaking, more will do so this year.

"This is based upon pulling on people's heartstrings as opposed to making a business case. You don't get more, it's about the 'why' – why you belong to the shul," Levine said.

Then there are shuls that have no dues at all, although they may charge for High Holiday tickets. Chabad congregations are well known for not charging dues, preferring instead to empower their rabbis to aggressively fundraise to support themselves and their communities. However, in areas where the Jewish community is well established, individual rabbis may act differently, said Rabbi Levi Gansburg, who runs the Chabad congregation in Toronto's affluent York Mills neighbourhood.

"Most Chabads do not have dues, but in cities where it's customary to have dues, they put it out there," he said.

Rabbi Aaron Levy, founding director and rabbi of Makom in downtown Toronto

Rabbi Gansburg did not take a salary for two years while he established himself. Now, about half the 600 or so people in his synagogue pay a membership fee, a move that was suggested by congregants who were accustomed to paying dues at other synagogues and preferred to pay once a year rather than have the rabbi "knocking at their door," Rabbi Gansburg said.

Others give more, but don't want a membership, while many young professionals want to be involved but don't want to pay traditional dues, he said.

"We cannot think we're going to attract the next generation of people and [run a shul like] a business," Rabbi Gansburg said. "At the end of the day, the rabbi has to take responsibility for the community. The rabbi says our primary concern is the next generation, and we will make it work."

In other words, Chabad's model requires rabbis to build relationships, so that ultimately, patrons will write a cheque.

"It takes a tremendous commitment of time and energy," Mael said of this option, and it likely isn't optimal for most synagogues.

On the other end of the spectrum, Makom, an unaffiliated "grassroots community" in downtown Toronto, has not charged membership fees, instead relying on donations, program fees and grants from Canadian and American foundations.

> *We operate on a shoestring budget and make the most of what we have.*

Makom has a broad array of offerings, including prayers, as well as arts-based programming and environmental activism, and a membership base that ranges from secular to modern Orthodox, said Rabbi Aaron Levy.

"I should spend more time fundraising. We operate on a shoestring budget and make the most of what we have," Rabbi Levy said.

The congregation, which rents space for its programs, is considering moving to some sort of membership fee to give it a more stable funding base.

If Makom were to charge dues, it would offer a sliding scale and there would be no dreaded membership committee. "It's a really important value that everyone feels welcome, and that includes across class issues," Rabbi Levy said.

But the harsh reality is that synagogue dues generally only cover a portion of the budget – Mael estimates that it's between 50 to 60 per cent of the costs.

For many communities that find themselves trapped by dues that can go no higher, along with large and aging buildings that need maintenance and an aging membership base, the only solution is to look at endowment funds to cover the gaps.

"We've got to get away from the cycle of 'our costs are going up so we've got to raise dues by three per cent,'" Levine said. "We've got to get creative about approaching families that can pay more."

At Beth David, the synagogue has begun the conversation with members about planned giving, but "it's not a part-time gig. You need a development officer," Levine said.

Leszner says Reform congregations are also looking at legacy funds and other ways to boost the bottom line, without raising dues.

"Looking at the future, if synagogue life is going to continue, we have to look at alternative sources of income," he said. ■

LYLE LEVINE PHOTO

Israel's musicians of tomorrow

Three teenaged artists from the Israeli group Musicians of Tomorrow performed Sept. 2 at a private fundraiser for the group at the Toronto home of Wendy and Elliott Eisen. Pictured, from left, are pianist Amit Amar, artistic director Anna Rosnovsky, Wendy Eisen, violinist Barak Dan, cellist Erez Fogel and Elliott Eisen.

INTERNATIONAL

Mindful of risks, Europe's Jews urge aid to refugees

CNAAN LIPSHIZ
JTA

When he looks into the tired eyes of the Syrian refugees now flooding Europe's borders, Guy Sorman is reminded of his father, Nathan, who fled Germany for France just months before Adolf Hitler came to power.

"He wanted to go to the United States. Visa declined. He tried Spain, same result. He ended up in France, neither welcome nor deported," Sorman wrote last week in an Op-Ed in *Le Monde* in which he argued that Europe should learn from its abandonment of the Jews during the Holocaust and accommodate the stream of migrants pouring through its borders from the war-torn Middle East.

Sorman's view is not uncommon among European Jews, many of them living in societies still grappling with a sense of collective guilt for their indifference to the Nazi genocide – or complicity in it. At a Holocaust memorial event in Paris on Sept. 6, French Chief Rabbi Haim Korsia urged Europe's leaders to match the actions of non-Jews who saved Jews from the Nazis by welcoming Syrian refugees.

Yet as many European Jews rush to the refugees' aid in word and deed, some worry that letting them stay may further contribute to the anti-Semitic violence driving Jews to leave Europe, much of it perpetrated by immigrants from the Middle East. Eager to exploit such fears, the Islamic State claimed in July that it had sent 1,000 fighters to infiltrate Europe as refugees.

"Some of these new immigrants – the Syrians and Iraqis especially – have been taught to hate Jews," Henri Gutman, president of the left-leaning Belgian Jewish cultural group CCLJ, wrote in an Op-Ed published Aug. 31 on the organization's website. "We risk further increases in anti-Semitism."

While urging "generosity" toward the refugees, Gutman said Europeans must observe "imperatives of defence" against Islamism. The Central Jewish Organization of the Netherlands, where two elderly Holocaust survivors were hospitalized recently following an assault by robbers who appeared to be Middle Eastern immigrants, spoke to a similar tension in a statement from its chairman, Ron van der Wieken.

While "aware that some Middle Eastern refugees harbour very negative feelings toward Jews ... Jews cannot withdraw support from those in need and fleeing serious violence," van der Wieken wrote. He urged Holland to devise a "charitable" refugee policy.

Such tension even exists for some of the hundreds of Jews helping the refugees on the ground in Hungary, Austria, Italy and beyond.

"As Eastern European Jews, we carry the knowledge of how it feels like to flee our homes," said Rabbi Zoltan Radnoti, the newly elected chairman of the rabbinical board of the Mazsihisz umbrella group of Hungarian Jewish communities. "Still, I help the refugees with fear that I am helping send danger to other Jews in Europe. I know some of the refugees may have fired on our [Israeli] soldiers. Others would have done so in a heartbeat. I know. But I am duty bound to help."

In Hungary, the main point of entry for a wave of refugees that authorities have only partially been able to check since its onset last month, approximately 150 Jews are involved in a relief operation mounted by local Jewish communities. Mazsihisz set up three collection depots in Budapest Jewish institutions from which it delivered approximately half a ton of food, clothes and other necessities to migrants. The community also collected $5,000 to buy diapers, medicine and water.

In Italy, the Jewish community of Milan threw open the doors of its Holocaust museum last month to accommodate homeless migrants from the Middle East and Africa.

And in Brussels, Rabbi Menachem Margolin, a Chabad rabbi and director of the European Jewish Association lobby group, is preparing to lead a delegation of rabbis this week to deliver food and non-perishables to the refugees.

Such actions are part of a wider popular reaction in Europe to the migrant problem. It's an issue that has worried immigration authorities for more than 20 years, but the wars in Syria and Iraq along with instability elsewhere in the region brought the crisis to a head last month, as tens of thousands began pouring into the European Union from Serbia.

In some cases, border guards were unable to stop the masses from crossing. In Hungary, authorities helped the masses move westward to wealthier EU countries, a policy consistent with right-wing Prime Minister Viktor Orban's claim that the migrants are "a German problem" because that's where the refugees "would like to go." The move flouts EU rules that make refugees the responsibility of the first member state they reach.

Last week, Germany vowed to absorb 500,000 refugees per year – far beyond the figure pledged by other members.

Some 340,000 people have immigrated from the Middle East into Europe in 2015 alone, according to EU figures.

Some of the volunteers were jarred into action by the image of Alan Kurdi, a Syrian boy whose body washed up on a Turkish beach on Sept. 2. Alan's father was the only member of his family who survived when its boat capsized en route from Turkey to Greece. The gruesome sight followed the discovery the previous week of 71 bodies in a truck abandoned on an Austrian highway.

But for Julia Kaldori, a Hungarian-born Jew who divides her time between Vienna and Budapest, the trigger was less shocking.

"I started seeing people convening at train stations in Budapest," said Kaldori, the editor of *Wina*, the monthly publication of the Jewish Community of Vienna. "I began talking to some of them, and I couldn't help becoming involved."

Kaldori says she is aware that statistically, Middle Eastern immigrants are responsible for most of the violence driving French Jews to leave in record numbers – nearly 7,000 in 2014 alone. But "when you look into their eyes, the refugee issue stops being a demographic issue," she said.

Kaldori hopes that having been helped by Jews, refugees with anti-Jewish views may reconsider. But Rabbi Radnoti says he is less hopeful. Instead, he cites the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah, the sinner cities that Abraham had pleaded with God to spare.

"If there are but five righteous souls in that group," Rabbi Radnoti said, "then we must do what we can to save them." ■

SeeJN | Did you get my BBM, Bibi?

GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE PHOTO

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, left, met with BlackBerry CEO John Chen on Sept. 8 and discussed BlackBerry's growth strategy in Israel. Chen, who was on a 24-hour visit to the Jewish state, said that he views Israel as a central locale for implementing his company's development strategy – technological acquisitions in the cyber and other spheres. The Canadian company recently acquired the Israeli firm WatchDox and turned it into a development centre.

OPINION

A Bedouin officer must work harder

Sagi Melamed

It was one of the hottest days of August. The heat and humidity had gone beyond unpleasant and become truly bad for one's health.

Betsy and I waited until evening to take a short bike ride in the fields surrounding Hoshaya. The air was still very hot. The fields that are normally busy with runners and cyclists were practically deserted.

Suddenly a young man jogged past us. Crew cut dark hair, wearing a shirt with a military insignia from which protruded a greenish plastic bag. He was sweating heavily. When I greeted him, he stopped running and began jogging in place.

"What's that garbage bag under your shirt for?" I asked.

"To wrap around my body so I sweat more."

"You want to sweat more on a day like today!" I exclaimed. "Where are you from?" I added, attempting to understand the garbage bag.

"I'm your neighbour. Bedouin. From the village Arab al-Heib. I'm an officer in the Bedouin battalion. Soon I'm going on a company commanders' course."

"Good for you!" Betsy and I chorused. I added, "But why do you make things harder for yourself with a bag under your shirt on such a hot day?"

"Because I'm a Bedouin officer," he said, still jogging in place, "and a Bedouin officer has to work harder to succeed."

The admiration on our sweaty faces grew. I asked if I could photograph him. He agreed, on condition it was from behind so he could not be identified. He then continued on his run, leaving us admiring and astonished.

Although I am unconvinced of the value of running wrapped in a garbage bag on a hot evening, to succeed as a Bedouin officer certainly does require extra work.

A Bedouin officer, over and above the difficulties facing any combat officer in the Israel Defence Forces, faces several additional challenges:

First, before army service – Bedouin youth come from communities where not everyone supports army service. Their education, language skills and acculturation tend to be below the national average, and that is before acknowledging that the "Arab enemy" the IDF is training them to fight, actually looks and sounds like them.

Second, when they get to the army – for them, Hebrew is their second language. Even in units like the Bedouin battalion, the army's language and mentality is Hebrew, and often the system is affected by prejudices and suspicion.

Third, when they go on leave – on the bus, in the mall, in a restaurant or at a movie, when a Bedouin soldier is not in uniform he looks and sounds Arab. In Israel, as painful as this is to admit, Arabs are viewed with more suspicion. Their bags are checked more carefully at the mall, they are stopped more often and questioned more.

Fourth, when they get home – not every Bedouin family supports army service for members of the Bedouin community. Depending on the village and clan, a Bedouin soldier might be viewed with admiration and respect, or with resentment and anger.

Fifth, when they complete their army service – despite increasing awareness and greater efforts by government and NGOs, there is still a great gap between what awaits newly released Jewish soldiers and their Bedouin peers.

"You're right," I silently told the anonymous Bedouin officer running off into the distance. "You *do* have to work harder. But you're not the first in that position. Think how hard the Jewish immigrants to Canada and United States had to work to integrate and succeed in their new societies a century ago. And see how far they've come today!"

And finally, may Israel's immigrants and minorities spend less time complaining and more time following the example of that Bedouin officer! Perhaps not to wrap themselves in plastic bags on a steamy evening, but certainly to arm themselves with determination and commitment to work harder on the way to success and integration. ■

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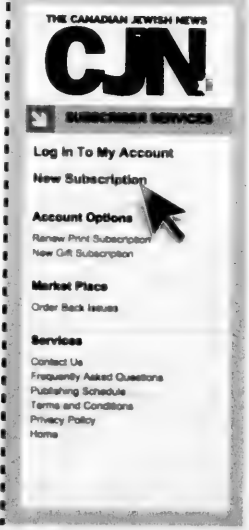

OPINION

Why Obama won nearly all Democrats on the nuclear deal

Yonah Jeremy Bob

The internal Democratic Party debate over whether or not to support the Obama administration's Iran nuclear deal has been one of the most fascinating U.S. foreign policy debates in recent memory.

The Iran nuclear deal was unofficially sealed on Sept. 8 with all 41 U.S. Senate Democrats declaring support, when only 34 were needed to carry the day if U.S. President Barack Obama and Congress disagreed.

When the deal was signed in July, the politics of whether the Democratic president could carry enough of his own party to move the deal forward were fraught with doubt. A clear majority of Americans were against the deal, and an even clearer majority of a range of members of Jewish organizations, led by AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee), campaigned hard against the deal, reportedly spending tens of millions of dollars to pressure many "on the fence" Democrats.

Yet at this point, the party, except for a statistically insignificant number, has lined up behind Obama – including many Jewish Democratic congressmen.

Given the high level of opposition to the deal, and putting substance aside, why has Obama succeeded politically? Understanding the answer requires recognizing a key nuance in electoral psychology and threat perception.

Most obviously, those doubting the deal underestimated the fact that congressmen historically support their own party's president on signature landmark issues almost unanimously.

Many Democrats voted for Obama's landmark health-care bill despite near certainty that such a vote would finish them politically, and the Iran deal was no less a test of party loyalty.

Second, the wider American Jewish population has supported Obama's policies on Israel and the Middle East, as a function of being heavily Democratic, even as Jewish organizations have sometimes not.

But what about the wider American public's disapproval?

Right or wrong (and probably right), the political bet for supporting the deal is likely that in 14 months, in November 2016, there will be no decisive consequences and the deal will not be a decisive issue in the American presidential election, even if foreign policy unexpectedly supplants the economy and personality as decisive.

The reason goes to the psychological perception of the Iranian nuclear threat, which most of the warnings have emphasized gets more serious in eight, 10 or 15 years. In the past, the nuclear threat of the Soviet Union impacted people psychologically, maybe even more than was warranted.

More recently, some psychologists have found that many nuclear weapons threats are now "out of sight, out of mind." The average citizen's relationship with the nuclear weapons threat, from Iran or anyone else, is characterized by ignorance, denial and apathy. For some, the science of nuclear weapons, the complexity of the deal and of the two sides' arguments over it were simply too complex to follow for them to continue to care about the issue.

An interesting analogy is the American climate change debate.

For several election cycles, most Americans have believed in climate change and theoretically backed policies to push back greenhouse gases connected with climate change. But that has not forced Congress to act, largely since environmental "judgment day," like a theoretical Iran nuclear judgment day, is vague and seems years away.

When people worry about nuclear terror, it is far more connected to a variety of closer-to-home terror issues: a "dirty" suitcase bomb, biological or chemical weapons or another 9/11-style attack.

In short, even many who expect an escalated nuclear threat from the deal see it as a 2020, 2024 or 2028 election issue, certainly not 2016.

By then, many current U.S. congressmen may be gone, and for others, it may be old news.

Understanding the psychology of how far Iran's nuclear threat likely is from impacting 2016 voter behaviour, it suddenly appears surprising that there was such doubt about the vote. ■

Yonah Jeremy Bob is a foreign affairs lecturer and a correspondent for the Jerusalem Post. www.yonahbobforeignaffairs.com

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Eight stories to watch in Israel this new year

BEN SALES
JTA, JERUSALEM

Tired of hearing about Israel's conflict with the Palestinians or the machinations of a certain Islamic Republic? There's plenty of other news happening in Israel, from uproar over the country's enormous natural gas reserves to a growing push to legalize marijuana.

Here are eight newsy items you may have missed in 5775 – and stories you should watch out for as the new year begins.

1. Israel's controversial gas drilling increases

Since the discovery of two huge offshore fields of natural gas in the Mediterranean Sea, Israel has turned from an energy importer to an exporter. Israel has signed agreements worth tens of billions of dollars to export gas to Egypt and Jordan, and in 2013, a conglomerate of two energy companies – Noble Energy and the Delek Group – began exporting gas from the Tamar natural gas field.

In June, however, an agreement to let Delek and Noble also develop the much larger Leviathan field set off protests in Israel. Critics, including the head of Israel's antitrust authority, who resigned, called the deal a monopoly.

At first, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to move ahead with the agreement, telling the Knesset in July that "we will not allow populism to bury the gas in the ground." But then Economy Minister Aryeh Deri refused to push it forward until a new antitrust commissioner is appointed. And in August, Egypt discovered its own offshore natural gas field, giving Israel some competition.

2. Will new reforms solve Israel's housing crisis?

Sure, Israelis are concerned about bombs and tunnels, but they're also worried about another threat to their ability to live in Israel: skyrocketing housing prices. Since 2008, prices have risen nearly 60 per cent. The prohibitive costs of housing were what led half a million Israelis to take to the streets in protest in 2011.

Running on a promise to address the housing crisis, the upstart centrist party Kulanu won 10 seats in the March Knesset elections. Now Kulanu's chairman, Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon, has advanced a series of reforms designed to curb prices, including raising taxes on the purchase of second homes and streamlining Israel's housing bureaucracy, making construction and contracting more efficient. Time will tell if his efforts make it easier for young Israelis to buy a home.

3. Israel becomes more French

As anti-Semitism rises in France, Israelis have been hearing more and more French on the street over the past few years. Since 2010, some 20,000 French Jews have moved to Israel, and officials predict that 2015 will end up being a second straight record year for French aliyah.

Parisians have filled the streets of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and coastal cities like Netanya and Ashdod. Israelis already are feeling their effect; shawarma stands, for example, now offer the signature Israeli lamb dish in a baguette as well as a pita. As Israel's French community continues to grow, we'll see how else the French arrivals may shape their new home.

4. Israel grows closer to India and China

The European Union has long been Israel's top trading partner and the United States its strongest ally. Those things are unlikely to change anytime soon, but the past year has seen Israel look to the East as well as the West. India's new prime minister, Narendra Modi, wants to strengthen ties with Israel – he intends to visit the country, and will be the first Indian head of state to do so – and has had friendly words for Netanyahu.

Israel, meanwhile, is looking to increase its trade with China. In 2015, Chinese investments in Israel reached $6 billion, and Israel and China are looking to establish a free-trade zone between them.

5. The rise of the 5-shekel cafe

Israelis are fond of complaining about high prices, but one cost you won't hear them gripe about is coffee. That's because Cofix, a rapidly expanding cafe chain, sells everything on its menu – from espresso to sandwiches – for five shekels (about $1.70 Cdn). Since it launched in 2013, Cofix has opened nearly 100 branches across Israel, and has plans to open a total of 300 stores. A knockoff competitor, Cofizz, has a couple dozen branches of its own with the same five-shekel concept.

Cofix has forced older chains to lower their prices, and it's not stopping there. It's opened a handful of bars where everything goes for five shekels, and just opened a couple branches of Super Cofix, a dollar store-style supermarket with the same prices.

6. Haredim join the workforce

With haredi Orthodox political parties back in the governing coalition, haredi men are unlikely to be included in Israel's draft. But haredim have been integrating into mainstream Israeli society another way: through the workforce.

According to recent data from Israel's Economy Ministry, 16 per cent of Israeli businesses now employ haredim, up from eight per cent in 2008. The number of haredi employees in the business sector also doubled, from 48,000 in 2008 to more than 100,000 now.

But haredi-secular relations still have a long way to go. A recent survey found that 45 per cent of haredim had no interaction at all with secular Jews.

7. Marijuana legalization gets closer

Israeli cannabis growers are hoping to make the desert bloom. Medical marijuana is already legal in Israel, and Israel's deputy health minister announced new regulations in July that will allow cannabis to be sold in pharmacies and prescribed by a wider range of doctors.

In the past few years, leaders of Israeli political parties have admitted to having a toke, and lawmakers from both right- and left-wing parties support marijuana legalization. Until 2015, the most outspoken advocate for legalization was the far-right Knesset member Moshe Feiglin, and while Feiglin didn't make it into Knesset in the March election, his cause goes on.

8. A 14-year-old Israeli is the face of Dior

Move over, Bar Refaeli. Sofia Mechetner, a 14-year-old Israeli from the Tel Aviv suburb of Holon, was recently named "the face" of the French fashion label Dior.

Mechetner, who had no prior modelling experience, is the daughter of Soviet immigrants and reportedly shared a bedroom with her two siblings, who she often cared for, as her parents were busy working to make ends meet. She landed the Dior job, in part, by running into the brand's creative director at a Dior store in Paris.

Her recent scantily-clad walk down a Paris runway reignited controversy about youth and high fashion, and fashion insiders have cautioned that modelling young comes with dangers and pressures. But at least for now, says her manager, her family's financial troubles are over. ■

SeeJN | Presidential selfie

MARK NEYMAN/GPO PHOTO

Israel's President Reuven Rivlin poses for a selfie with an Israeli soldier during a visit to an army base on the Israel-Gaza border Sept. 10.

Jewish Life

Samples of Terri Mittelmann's work include, from far left, a wedding glass menorah, a fundraising event gift and a challah board.

Art from wedding glass shards

SHERI SHEFA
SSHEFA@THECJN.CA

For many, there is no greater milestone in their life than their wedding day, and Terri Mittelmann, a Thornhill-based fused glass artist, designs one-of-a-kind pieces to capture that life-changing event.

For the past eight years, Mittelmann has run her Get2Give Glassworks studio to produce Judaica in the form of contemporary art.

Her most in-demand item is her wedding glass kit, which allows brides and grooms to commission Mittelmann to transform the glass they break under the chupah into items such as mezuzot, picture frames, menorahs or seder plates.

"Most of my work is with the wedding glass kits. The kit comes with the mouth-blown glass and a bag with a design card inside. After the cup is broken, the bride or groom, or whoever it is that is taking charge, will fill out the form. There are a number of options the couple can choose from," Mittelmann explained.

Using the shards of glass broken at the end of the wedding ceremony, Mittelmann produces a unique work of art that serves as both a functional Judaica piece, and a meaningful memento from a couple's wedding day.

She said half her clients are content to fill out the form and send the glass in, and the other half will come in for private consultations.

"Almost every week I am meeting with one or more clients. Sometimes people just want to see more of my work and sometimes they have a special request."

Although Mittelmann's business is only eight years old, she has spent the last 25 years involved in art education, having taught an art class at Bais Yaakov Elementary School, as well as a volunteer art program at Eitz Chaim Day School.

In her career as a fused glass artist working out of her 350-square-foot home studio with two kilns, Mittelmann said she is thrilled to be part of a new wave of Jewish artists offering Judaica in the form of contemporary art that is both steeped in tradition and esthetically modern.

"I don't think there was ever a time when couples didn't actively purchase or receive Judaica. Families still want to have a menorah, seder plate, mezuzah, candlesticks. The concept of being able to personalize these ritual objects by integrating the shards of glass from their wedding ceremony has added a new level of sentiment," Mittelmann said.

"To me, it's a testament to the fact that even in our hectic, high-tech, rushed lives, the pull toward connecting with our roots, our family heritage and our Jewish traditions is still very, very powerful."

She said that although collecting Judaica is not a new trend, more and more artists are producing work that is still traditional, yet modern, "as opposed to the stuff you might think of in your head that you've seen at your grandmother's house.

"I think that although sentiment and tradition still play a very important role, when couples and individuals seek out art with Jewish themes and motifs for their personal space, it's not the only factor in play," she said.

"It has become very clear to me that when people are looking for Judaica to place in their home for display – like any other type of art – it has to appeal to their esthetic sensibility... To me, this is another way of capturing an incredible Jewish milestone in people's lives and I think it's so important." ■

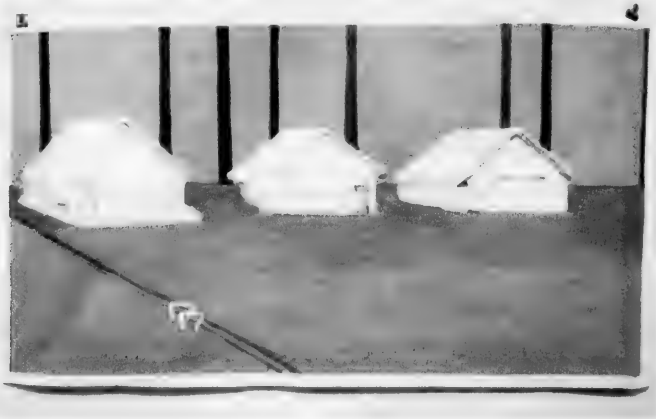
TSO concertmaster dies

Acclaimed violinist Jacques Israelievitch, who enjoyed a storied international career as a soloist, conductor and teacher, died of lung cancer Sept.5 in Toronto. He was 67.

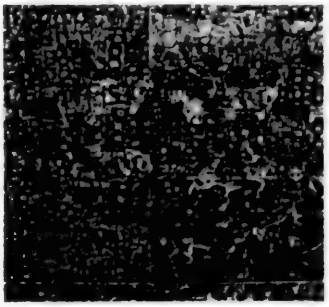
For 20 years, Israelievitch served as concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra - the longest tenure for a leader in its history. He had numerous solo engagements to his credit, appeared with many of the world's major orchestras, and, as a distinguished chamber musician, performed with pianists Emanuel Ax and Yefim Bronfman, and cellist Yo-Yo Ma.

See full obit at cjnews.com. *The CJN* will run a full tribute in an upcoming edition.

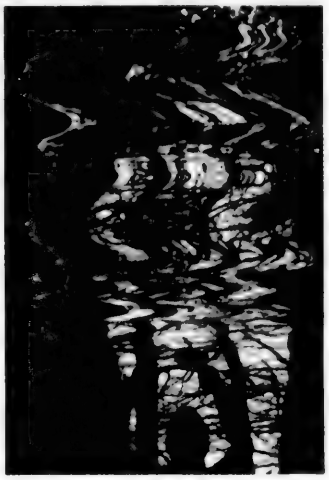
Exhibit showcases Jewish and native concepts



Swimming Pool Houses by Talia Peckel



Green Book of Job by Rochelle Rubinstein



Medicine Man by Chief Lady Bird

Backyard with Sukkah by Aaron Rotenberg

Dancing in the Wind by Darlene J. Winfield

Stompin' Tom by Susan Szenes

CJN STAFF

The exhibition *Shmita/Seven Generations* showcases seven artists' interpretations of the Jewish concept of shmittah and the indigenous concept of seven generations through photography, painting and mixed media works.

A collaboration with the Indigenous Visual Cultural Program at OCAD and the Jewish Agency for Israel, the exhibition is the first of its kind. It's on display at the Gallery at the Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., until Sept. 30.

While readers may be acquainted with the concept of shmittah, the biblical injunction to let the land rest every seventh year, seven generations is an indigenous perspective and practice applied to all decision-making, impacting a vast range of matters, from use and stewardship of natural resources to economic and peace treaties with other nations. The basic premise is that decisions that provide benefits and stability to the seventh generation into the future are decisions that will benefit all generations.

Shmita/Seven Generations includes works by Chief Lady Bird (Nancy King), Talia Peckel, Aaron Rotenberg, Susan Szenes, Rochelle Rubinstein, Isaac Weber and Darlene J. Winfield. The exhibition is curated by Deanna Di Lello of the MNjcc, David General of OCAD's Indigenous Visual Culture Program and Eran Shafir of the Jewish Agency. ■

Admission is free. www.mnjcc.org

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Wet Hot American Summer and Jewish stereotypes

Michael Fraiman

Ask any Jew who their favourite character is in *Wet Hot American Summer: First Day of Camp* and they'll tell you it's the Israeli soccer counsellor, Yaron. The dark-skinned, mop-haired kibbutz export – played with obnoxious vacancy and listless sexuality by the TV show's director, David Wain – has been regarded as such an incredibly spot-on depiction of the modern hippyish Israeli that one writer was inspired to pen "An Ode to the Israeli Summer Camp Sexpot" in *Tablet*. *Jewlicious* also lauded the authenticity of Yaron's Birkenstocks and too-unbuttoned denim shirt, while Howard Salzberg, a former co-camper of Wain's, now a camp director, called him "the spitting image of my predecessor....It's hard to watch because it's so funny to me."

There's no doubt that Wain nailed the joke. But what this says about Israeli sexpots is far less telling than what is says about the evolution of onscreen Jewish stereotypes.

Wet Hot American Summer is the Netflix-produced prequel to a critically maligned indie comedy from 2001 of the same name. By some weird happenstance, the then-31-year-old Wain cast such unknown actors as Amy Poehler, Bradley Cooper, Paul Rudd, Joe Lo Truglio, Ken Marino, Christopher Meloni, Molly Shannon and Elizabeth Banks, marking the only time '90s stand-up comedian Janeane Garofalo and David Hyde Pierce (a.k.a. Frasier's brother) would be the top-billed actors amid such a list of names.

Both the original movie and Netflix show take place at a Jewish summer camp. The movie didn't dwell on its characters' Jewishness, but slyly inserted a handful of jokes for Jews to chuckle at: when scrawny little Coop, played by co-writer Michael Showalter, confesses his love to fellow counselor Katie, he blurts out, "I love it that sometimes for no reason you're late for shul!"

It's for the best that Wain and Showalter avoided leaning too heavily on the Jew gags. If they had, the movie (and subsequent show) wouldn't have been as funny – more than alienating goyish viewers, they would have risked Jews rolling their eyes at tired tropes.

Yaron played by David Wain

Wet Hot American Summer is a great example of the changing face of onscreen Jewish stereotypes. Historically, Jewish jokes have written themselves: we're not good at sports, our old-Europe grandparents bicker, Woody Allen frets about anti-Semitism.

Many famous Jewish comedians have subsequently become caricatures of themselves: Larry David is the Jew in a goy's world, Adam Sandler is the Jew who never grew up, Roseanne Barr is the kvetching mom, Jerry Stiller is the hilariously paranoid grandfather you kinda wish you had.

Yaron, though, is a different beast. He's a quiet stereotype – never the focal character, rarely even audible. He impresses the impressionable North American kids with devil sticks and empty-headedness disguised as introspection. He is older, sexually confident and a smoker – so painfully true to real life, you can almost smell his body-sprayed musk.

Ultimately, that's why he's funny: the details injected into Yaron are so precise that they transcend the confines of the stereotype he so obviously is. The joke isn't that he's a caricature; the joke is that he's real.

Broad-stroke stereotypes can be funny, but they only reach brilliance when they're accurate. And accuracy demands specificity. It's the difference between Yaron and Zohan, Sandler's once-upon-a-time Israeli special agent – one parodies someone during a particular time and place, while the other is Adam Sandler with a silly accent.

Good writers understand that being Jewish is no longer a punchline in and of itself. Defining a character by his or her Jewishness traps writers and actors, while audiences lose interest. We want to see real people – people we recognize and recognize as being funny.

Because real Jews aren't Woody Allen. Real Jews go to camp. ■

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Award-winning book is worth a second look

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

One century after her birth, Toronto author Helen Weinzweig's award-winning novel *Basic Black With Pearls* has just been reissued by House of Anansi, the Toronto-based publisher that first released the book in 1980.

In the novel, which won a City of Toronto book award, a somewhat deranged, unhappily married female narrator tells her story of a series of liaisons with a mysterious lover who is a foreign spy.

Although many of the trysts occur in exotic locations around the world, most of the novel is set in Toronto, especially the city as remembered by the narrator, Shirley Kaszenbowski, also known as Lola Montez. The backdrop for the story is an exacting cityscape of the old downtown district of the 1940s and 1950s, featuring many familiar and iconic shops, restaurants, bakeries, department stores and city institutions, including Shopsy's and the old Yiddish theatre at Dundas and Spadina.

The novel's strange premise and experimental surrealistic style did not prevent it from gaining a reputation as a minor feminist classic. Kaszenbowski's modus operandi is to check into a prearranged hotel where an envelope is waiting for her. Inside her room, she tears open the envelope and examines the contents, usually some money as well as several pages of a recent magazine such as the *National Geographic*. Somewhere in the pages of the magazine, she believes, is a coded message telling her where she can meet her secret lover, Coenraad.

"This is the point I am driven towards – that exquisite instant when I receive word of our next meeting," the narrator informs us. "I pack and unpack; find my way to airports, bus stations and railway terminals; shiver or swelter; go hungry or vomit in public toilets. Sometimes I travel half around the earth to decipher a message that instructs me to leave the next day for yet another distant destination."

As she progresses in her lonely and solipsistic romantic quest to join her idealized lover, Kaszenbowski seems to interpret all casual interactions, such as with a saleslady at a scarf counter in a department store, as having immense hidden significance that could help her interpret the clues from the magazine. Romantic illusions, even delusions, seem essential to her inner sense of self and purpose. Is she psychotic or merely driven, as many of us are, to escape from unhappiness into the arms of pleasure?

No matter what momentary pains and anxieties the narrator experiences, however, the journey is rarely without its pleasures for the reader. Weinzweig is an exquisite stylist with a refreshing and often funny way of observing the world. The joy is often in the small details. Here she is, passing through an anonymous convention in the King Edward Hotel, and venturing en passant, as she often does, into a subtle observation of social manners:

"Men in turtlenecks and pipes; women in slacks and shoulder bags, all wearing plastic-covered name tags over the left breast. Those not in line milled about, the women coming up close to the men's chests to read their names, but men keeping their faces at a distance from female breasts, lowering their heads a little if necessary in order to read. A harassed clerk called for reinforcements..."

Life for our narrator does not always occur in the present moment but is often deflected into the past; like many a modern hero, she seems to live largely within her own head. Much of the narrative is filled with reminiscences of previous trysts, her experiences as a girl and a young women, and second-hand Scheherezade-like tales within tales of other lives in European locations, some involving ugly encounters with Nazis.

Basic Black With Pearls,
by Helen Weinzweig
(House of Anansi)

The narrator's peculiar odyssey leads to a dramatic confrontation with her husband, Zbigniew, and the woman who replaced her in his bed. Ultimately, she decides to trade in her adventuress's basic black travelling dress for another swing at domestic life.

Weinzweig, who died in 2010, was born into an Orthodox Jewish family in Poland in 1915 and came to Toronto with her mother at the age of nine after her parents divorced. Inflicted with tuberculosis as a young woman, she spent two years in a sanatorium, where she was a voracious reader of works by Conrad, Barthes, Beckett and others (likely Virginia Woolf among them), who became major influences. As the wife of noted Canadian composer John Weinzweig, she focused on supporting her husband's career and did not launch her own literary career until relatively late in life.

Like many women of her generation, Weinzweig seemed "torn between a commitment to family, and a very real need for freedom and experience," John Frizzell wrote in an introduction in Anansi's new edition of *Basic Black With Pearls*. Among other possibilities, the book may be interpreted as "an expose of the emptiness of traditional marriage, yet simultaneously a cry for family love, its strengths and support," he observed.

• • •

The Jewish Oil Magnates of Galicia (McGill-Queen's University Press)

This 522-page hardcover volume combines two books in one. First, there is Valerie Schatzker's non-fiction scholarly history from 1853 to 1945 of the almost-forgotten East Galician Jews who became early "wildcatters" and oil barons in one of the world's first petroleum industries, concentrated in the region around Boryslaw, Drohobycz, Stary Sambor and other towns.

The second part features *The Jewish Oil Magnates*, a 1954 Yiddish novel by Galician Holocaust survivor Julien Hirszhaut, adeptly and expertly translated by Miriam Dashkin Beckerman of Toronto.

Early Jewish entrepreneurs refined the paraffin-like substance found in their fields into pure-burning Shabbat candles. That was the genesis of a century-long industry that continued through boom and bust cycles into the era of World War II, when Nazi occupiers, using Jewish slave labourers, squeezed out the last barrels for their war effort.

There is tremendous logic in combining these two unlikely parts into a whole, as each component illuminates the other. The texts are enhanced with numerous regional maps and rare illustrations of the oil fields. Schatzker, who also edited Hirszhaut's novel for publication, deserves credit for bringing this little-known chapter of Galician Jewish history to light. ■

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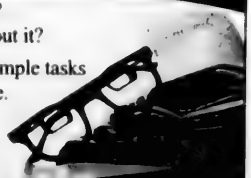

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Using social media to gauge 'empathy effect'

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Entrepreneur and artist Kim Smiley said she feels the Internet has become a place of "merciless judgment" and she's counteracting this with her social media project The Empathy Effect.

Roughly 100 days ago, Smiley, a jewelry designer and former vice-president of donor development for the United Jewish Appeal's annual campaign in Toronto, launched what is essentially a year-long social experiment designed to elicit empathy from strangers.

Starting June 8, Smiley, who worked in the non-profit sector for 13 years, created a Facebook group for The Empathy Effect, and each morning, except for Shabbat, she posts a black and white photo she believes will inspire empathy – a picture of a person, an animal, a scene from nature or an inanimate object – accompanied by a short, written description.

"It's a platform to share stories of extraordinary people in the world… Sometimes we get a little cynical… we can become immune to other people's suffering. The project is about reawakening people to something already within us," Smiley said.

Most photos are taken by Smiley herself, but some are sourced from the Internet, from the individual whose story she's sharing or from a member of the person's family.

By using online analytics tools to keep track of the number of Facebook "likes" and shares each post gets, Smiley is attempting to assess which stories resonate with people.

Social entrepreneur and artist Kim Smiley is hoping to spread empathy with a year-long social media experiment. BRIAN ABRACEN PHOTO

She's ultimately seeking to address the more challenging question of whether the project will mobilize followers to become more empathetic in their flesh and blood lives.

"It's the whole question that underlies the experiment: can we take an online experiment on empathy and transmit it into something living and breathing in this world?" Smiley said.

It's not clear how this will be achieved, or even gauged, though Smiley said she's gotten incredible feedback from followers of the group, and suggested that her daily post could contribute to their starting their day on a positive note, "looking around with eyes of empathy instead of being disgruntled and cynical."

At the end of 365 days, the person profiled in or connected to the photo (even the nature photos typically include some profile of a person) that garners the most online engagement will get to choose a charity to be the recipient of a cash prize, which Smiley said will be a minimum of $5,000.

The money will come from Smiley's socially minded jewelry business, Sappho by Kim Smiley, which hires and trains marginalized women to make the jewelry at $18 per hour and donates 20 per cent of the proceeds from its trunk shows to charity.

Smiley said she's seeking other individuals and companies to contribute to The Empathy Effect prize.

On the day of this writing, The Empathy Effect Facebook group had 46,112 members, and Smiley said it's been interesting to observe which posts "spread virally."

For example, the most popular post to date was one she put up on Day 5 of the experiment.

It featured Matthew Morton, an obstetrician/ gynecologist at Mount Sinai Hospital who was diagnosed with brain cancer at 32, and told he had 12 to 18 months to live.

Seven years later, on Morton's 39th birthday, Smiley posted a homage to him, praising the way he and his wife "seize[d] the precious fragility of each day." After Morton's diagnosis he completed a medical fellowship, received an award for excellence in residence education and had two more children.

Analytics showed Smiley that more than 75,000 people saw the post, 1,709 people liked it and 270 shared it.

Two months later, Morton died.

A more recent post featured a tribute to neurologist and author Oliver Sacks, emphasizing his unique dignity and humanity.

While Smiley creates and writes most of the site's content based on things that catch her eye or inspire her, she's also hoping to cultivate what she calls a "confederacy of dreamers," a global network of people who will contribute written posts to the page or submit photographs to accompany posts.

"I want to show empathy on a global scale, not just through a local lens," she said.

She emphasized that she didn't initiate the project out of a belief that there's an "empathy deficit" in the world.

Rather, she feels that people can sometimes use a reminder to bring their awareness back to caring about the lives and the suffering of others.

"We're often bombarded with such negative news, with people's lack of compassion. I want to create a counterforce to that," she said. ■

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The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

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JCC Maccabi girls bring home the hardware

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

The Toronto Blue girls 16U soccer team won gold and bronze medals.

There was a time, perhaps, when girls just wanted to have fun. Now, they want to win – and then have some fun.

Girls teams were a big part of Toronto's contingent at last month's JCC Maccabi Games and ArtsFest in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and the girls did their share of winning, bringing home gold, silver and bronze medals.

The Toronto Blue girls 16 and under (16U) soccer team, one of two fielded in the competition, won a gold medal as well as a bronze. The 16U girls basketball team won a gold medal, as did the 14U team. The boys 16U basketball team won silver, losing to Philadelphia in the finals by a score of 67-57, while the boys 14U team earned a gold medal by defeating Hart/EB 65-49. The contingent of six swimmers (not all of them girls) came home with 24 medals in all.

Not bad for a city that, only five years ago in Baltimore, sent a team of 10 athletes in all. This year's contingent was 90 strong, making it the second-largest team at the competition, said Alex Voihanski, head of the Toronto delegation.

Altogether, some 1,600 Jewish teens participated in the sports competitions and arts events, from across the eastern United States as well as from Great Britain, Israel, Poland and Australia.

Forty members of the Toronto team were girls, and the most dominant athlete on the team, in any sport, was a girl, Voihanski said.

He was referring to Samantha Brown, the shooting guard for the 16U basketball team, who will "age out" and no longer be available to participate in next year's Games, which are for athletes 13-16 years old.

In her two years leading the basketball team, she's averaged 35-40 points a game. In the gold medal contest this year against Philadelphia, she scored 26 points in a row despite being double- and triple-teamed, pacing the Toronto team to a 52-45 win.

"She was literally unstoppable. Without question she is the most dominant athlete we've had since we took over six years ago," Voihanski said, referring to the time when he and Jeremy Blustein of JCC Chai Sports assumed responsibility for the Toronto team.

Girls are turning to sports like never before, and many are getting their entrée through programs offered by JCC Chai Sports. The organization's house league soccer program alone serves about 100 girls, he said.

Overall, "women's sports are getting humongous" in Toronto, as girls and their families see the benefits of it plus the growing opportunity of earning scholarships in sports programs at colleges south of the border.

In other JCC Maccabi results, swimmer Chad Walt won gold medals in the 200-metre freestyle event as well as the 200-metre backstroke. He added to his haul with silver medals in the 14U 50-metre freestyle, 100-metre butterfly and 50-metre breaststroke, along with a bronze in the 200-metre individual medley.

Megan Pearlman won a bronze medal in the 50-metre butterfly for girls 14U and a silver in the 200-metre backstroke and 50-metre backstroke.

The boys 16U baseball team finished out of the medals, while the boys 16U soccer team likewise finished without any hardware. ■

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The Socialite

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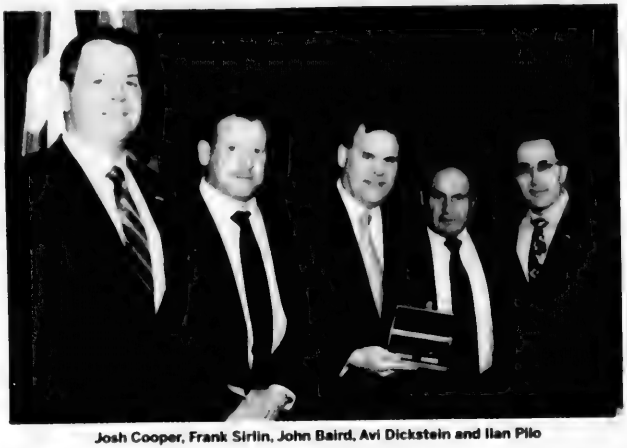

Josh Cooper, Frank Sirlin, John Baird, Avi Dickstein and Ilan Pilo

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JNF Negev Dinner

Everything was beautiful, including the 350 guests attending the JNF Pacific Region dinner honouring John Baird, Canada's former minister of foreign affairs. Guests and dignitaries included representatives of major Jewish institutions, rabbis and Minister of Justice Suzanne Anton (representing British Columbia). Also in attendance were Rafael Barak, Israel's Ambassador to Canada and Avi Dickstein, executive director of resources development division at KKL-JNF. Proceeds will support the creation of the Sderot Memorial Park. This morale-lifting new park, which will be named after Baird, will host a variety of family oriented activities for residents of a city that has been the ongoing target of rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip since 2001. ■ – *The Socialite*

Tyler Golden, Cathy Golden, John Baird, Bernice Carmeli and David Golden

Yosef Wosk, Gary Segal and Joseph Marciano

David and Tanis Goldman

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Marie Doduck, Sandra Miller, John Baird, Wai Young and Norman Miller

The Socialite wants your photos. Email thesocialite@thecjn.ca for submission details.

What's New

SEPT. 17 - SEPT. 24

by Lila Sarick

Sunday, Sept. 20

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE
The Lublin and Vicinity Society of Toronto hold its annual *Haskara* at Dawes Road Cemetery, Section 2N, at noon.

JERUSALEM HIGH SCHOOL INFO
Daniel Laufer holds an information session for students and parents about Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim (TRY)/ USY High/ Ramah Jerusalem High School programs at 4 p.m. Address provided on registration at tinyurl.com/TRYinfo.

Thursday, Sept. 24

NASH AND DRASH
Beth Emeth Synagogue presents "Nash and drash" with **Rabbi Howard Morrison**, noon. $13. RSVP 416-633-3838.

Coming Events

CHILDREN OF SURVIVORS
Baycrest and the Miles Nadal JCC offer support groups for adult children of Holocaust survivors. Call **Shoshana Yaakobi**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2271, or email syaakobi@baycrest.org.

FALL CLASSES
Maccabi Canada's volleyball program for children age 9 to 16 starts Oct. 19/20. Call 416-398-0515, ext. 204, or email michele@maccabicanada.com.

Morasha adult classes, taught by **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**, **Seymour Epstein** and **Rabbi Roy Tanenbaum.** Fall session starts Oct. 14. All classes at Beth Emeth Synagogue. Call 416-789-7400.

Temple Sinai offers Hebrew classes for "beginners plus," starting Oct. 6 and intermediates starting Oct. 1. Call 416-487-4161.

Temple Har Zion offers beginner and advanced beginner Hebrew classes, Thursday nights. www.templeharzion.com.

Deadline reminders:

Deadlines will change for the holidays. The deadline for the issue of Oct. 1 is Sept. 17. The deadline for the issue of Oct. 8 is Sept. 24. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Sending New Year's wishes

Residents of Baycrest's Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged, gathered to paint Rosh Hashanah cards earlier this month, which chaplain Rabbi Rena Arshinoff will deliver to Jewish patients at Bridgepoint Active Healthcare. Reva Gilman, left, works on her holiday card with Rabbi Arshinoff.

AMANDA PETERSON PHOTO

Pride of Israel Synagogue offers conversational ulpan method Hebrew for beginners (must read Hebrew), intermediate and advanced speakers. Free learn to read Hebrew class, Thursdays 7:15 p.m. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

Improve your Yiddish skills. Classes for all levels start Sept. 27, 10 a.m.-noon, Beth David Synagogue. Call 416-635-2883, ext. 5189 or www.committeeforyiddish.com.

Israeli dancing for beginners and intermediates starts this fall Sunday evenings at Temple Kol Ami. Email mayat.cohen@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Jewish Teen Philanthropy Board of Greater Toronto is looking for teens in grades 9-11 interested in making a difference in the community. Call **Aron**, 416-635-2883, ext. 5238, or akatz@ujafed.org

DANI is looking for volunteers in their 20s and 30s to connect by phone, email and in person with adults with disabilities. Call 905-889-3264, ext. 226, or email ssokol@dani-toronto.com

Baycrest needs volunteer musical performers to share their love of the arts and to perform for elders. Contact **Joanne Ingell** at jingell@baycrest.org.

Volunteers needed to sell poppies Oct. 30-Nov. 11 in the Bathurst Street and St. Clair Avenue area for the Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch. Email sgs823@sympatico.ca.

The Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch, Ladies Auxiliary, is looking for women who have had a spouse, parents or grandparents in the armed forces to join. Call **Eva Kay**, 905-886-5119.

Volunteer drivers needed once a month to drive vision impaired seniors to social events. Call **Sheila**, 905-731-9667.

LEGAL SUPPORT FOR WOMEN
Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org

POMEGRANATE GUILD
The Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles meets Sept. 30 at Temple Sinai, 7:30 p.m. Guest presenter is **Susan Avishai**, who specializes in deconstructing fashion to create artistic works. www.pomegranateguild.ca

LECTURE SERIES
Temple Emanu-El's lecture series begins Oct. 19, 2-4 p.m., with **Iain Scott** discussing "The four greatest scenes in opera." Other presenters include **Dr. Geoff Fernie**, **Dr. Carolyn Harris**, **Dr. Colleen Carney**, **Mike Daley.** $45/ series; $15/lecture. 416-449-3880.

BE THE MATCH
Adath Israel Congregation holds a stem cell and bone marrow clinic, Oct. 25, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

BOOK CLUBS
Elaine Newton reviews *The Children Act*, by **Ian McEwan**, Temple Emanu-El, Oct. 1, 1 p.m. $10.

Heather Kassel discusses "Genius and eccentricity as seen in the movies, *Mr. Turner*, *The Theory of Everything* and *The Imitation Game*." (Movies not shown on review night.) Oct. 20, 8 p.m. at Adath Israel Synagogue. $50/$85 for the 6-session series; $10/$15 per review. **Beverley** 416-499-6920.

SAVE A CHILD'S HEART
Save a Child's Heart hosts an "UnGala" fundraiser, Sept. 30, 7 p.m. at the Montecito. For tickets, www.saveachildsheart.ca or 416-324-9113.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS
Chai branch of National Council for Jewish Women invites women over 50 to join. 416-633-5100.

FRIENDS OF YIDDISH
Friends of Yiddish holds its annual membership breakfast with entertainment by **Arkadi Tulchinski and Michael Ziskind,** Sept. 27, 10:30 a.m.,Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Free for members/$15 for guests. RSVP by Sept. 18, **Sandy**, 416-736-8073; 416-458-1440 or email yiddish18@yahoo.ca

THE CHORALAIRS
The Choralairs Choir starts its new season Sept. 29, 7-9:30 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre. No audition needed. Call **Sally**, 416-636-8247, or email choralairs@gmail.com.

SUKKOT HAPPENINGS
Temple Kol Ami celebrates Sukkot at Thornhill Woods Park, Sept. 27, 5:30 p.m. with food, singing, crafts.

Beth Emeth Synagogue presents "Steak in the sukkah," Oct. 1. RSVP by Sept. 29. 416-633-3838 or steakinthesukkah.eventbrite.ca. $36.

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds a family Sukkot festival, Oct. 4, 10 a.m. RSVP 416-385-3910.

SPOUSAL BEREAVEMENT GROUPS
Baycrest Terraces/Wagman Centre offers a spousal bereavement group for men and women over 55 starting in October. **Shawn Fremeth**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2986.

Adath Israel Congregation offers bereavement support groups for widows, Oct. 15-Nov. 19, 1-3 p.m.; for men and women Oct. 20-Nov. 24, 7:30 p.m.
Free for members, $180 for non-members. **Nilly**, 416-635-5340.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com.
- It's Never Too Late to Date: A workshop for men and women over 40 who have been single for more than 2 years. Sept. 17, 7 p.m. Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**,416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Swing dance classes with **Kris Light,** Oct. 13-Dec. 1. Dance lesson at 11 a.m., social dance at noon. No experience or partner needed. Register 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or email lisar@mnjcc.org.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and Ping-Pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9.

Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis, starts Sept. 22.

Exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, starts Sept. 30 at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526, or colinb@mnjcc.org.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Sept. 20, **Paul Mathew** performs the songs of **Molly Picon**, 1:30 p.m.; Sept. 24, lecture on "Estate planning strategies," 1:30 p.m. Book club meets Tuesdays at 1 p.m.
- **Association of Jewish Seniors** holds a Sukkot lunch, Oct. 1, noon, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. Guest speaker **Stephen Adler**, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. $20/$25. Must pre-register 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Bridge, partners required, Tuesdays, noon; Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; Bring your knitting and needlepoint and relax Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.; Bingo, Sept. 28, 1 p.m.; Casino Woodbine Oct. 14.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.
- JCC players, after-school musical theatre program starts Oct. 7, 6:30 p.m.
- Music for babies and toddlers starts Oct. 15, 10 a.m.
- Sports with Jay, parent and tots, starts Oct. 18, 10 a.m.
- Family ceramics (ages 4-12 with an adult) starts Oct. 18, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- Beginner mah-jong starts Oct. 7, 10:30 a.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "Reverence and regard: the complicated women of the silver screen," Oct. 7-28 at 1 p.m.
- **Sue Miller** teaches "The harvest painting workshop," to celebrate Sukkot, Oct. 18, 1-6 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Celebrating women artists," starting Oct. 13, 1 p.m.
- Bridge level 1 starts Oct. 8 at 10 a.m.
- All levels welcome to join daytime and evening ceramics classes.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org
- *Shmita/Seven Generations* is in the gallery until Sept. 30. The artists participate in Culture Days, Sept. 27, 1-4 p.m.
- The gallery is looking for an Israeli visual artist for March 2016. Submissions close Nov. 1. Contact deannad@mnjcc.org
- Shabbat family party fall session starts Sept. 25, 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Email anniem@mnjcc.org.
- Kat-Ka Team, Sept. 27, 1-3:30 p.m., grades 2-8. Play, create and explore with Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror. RSVP shaliach.gesher@gmail.com
- Sukkot crafts and stories for the whole family, Uptown Loft, 2464 Yonge St., Sept. 20, 10 a.m.-noon.
- Mixed abilities dance event with **DJ Layah Jane** Sept. 20, 4 p.m. Call ext. 330.
- From tummies to mummies: Pre- and post-natal bootcamp, aquafit and yoga classes. Call ext. 567.
- Register now for Hebrew and Yiddish classes starting Oct. 13. Call ext. 388 or anniem@mnjcc.org
- New Year by the pool: Brief ceremony at 6:45 p.m., followed by family swim till 8 p.m. Sept. 20.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Broadway Musicals: a Jewish legacy*, Sept. 20, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker, **David Gale**. $15/$10. Box office opens one hour before show.
- *Defending the Caveman*, a comedy about how men and women relate to each other, previews Oct. 1, 2; performances Oct. 3, 9, 10 at 8 p.m. www.thecaveman.ca.
- Ukulele Circle with **Jodi Pape**, Sept. 27, 2-4 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the art of Degas, Oct. 19, 26, 1:30 p.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.
- Family Sukkot art workshop, Sept. 27 at 4:30 p.m.
- PJ Plus is a parent/tot program for children ages 18 months to 3 years. Sundays, starts Oct. 18, 10 a.m.
- Social skills groups, swimming, sports for children with autism on Saturdays.
- Painting: colour theory, technique, compositional development, Thursdays, starts Oct. 8, 1 p.m.
- Royal Conservatory of Music presents "The enigma of Russian music," Oct. 20, 7 p.m.
- Daytime or evening beginner mah-jong classes start the week of Oct. 8.
- Bridge level 1 starts Oct. 7, 7 p.m.
- Glass fusion workshop to make a Chanukah menorah, Oct. 10 at 7 p.m.
- J Reads book club discusses *The Invention of Wings*, Oct. 27, 10:30 a.m.■

SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

The saga of red and grey

Dr. Michael Gordon

Sometimes things happen that trigger important associations, and it can be hard to follow a conversation when someone interrupts a train of thought with an interjection about a personal, associated experience.

For some, this derails the train of the conversation or is interpreted as not paying attention, but that is the way the brain works – compellingly, for some people. When it occurs in fiction or cinema, it is often characterized as flashback and deemed to be an effective way of showing how an experience ties into a person's collective memory.

For those dealing with people living with dementia, however, it is well recognized, because the past is often retained in all its vividness so that associations will bring back memories – not all of which may be pleasant – and thereby cause disquiet in the person for whom those memories are being reactivated.

For me, the saga of red and grey was not so profound – it was merely the proximity of the events that I came to associate with one aspect of my practice.

The first part of my short saga started as I was loading heavily laden bags into the back of my car after a recent visit to Costco. As I juggled one bag, a plastic bin of bright red, sweet and delicious tomatoes fell from the bag, and with the impact, the plastic cover came off and the road next to the car was strewn with these gorgeous, pecan-sized tomatoes. I decided to gather them up, with the idea of washing them when I got home – not particularly worried that the ground would have made them inedible. I gathered them, put them back in the container and drove home. As I lifted the bag out of the trunk, some of the delectables fell onto my driveway, and there I was gathering them up again.

Later that morning, I had to buy some grey concrete paint to redo a backyard retaining wall from which the winter-battered paint had been peeling. My son, who is well-versed in renovations, instructed me to put on primer and use grey concrete outdoor paint to do the job properly.

> *For the elderly patients I care for, one of the most devastating events that can occur in their lives is a fall.*

As I put the paint into the cart at the store, I did not notice that because the cart was designed so that children could put their legs through the it, the back of the cart was in fact open, and the next thing I knew, the can was on the floor – the top off – and paint spilled everywhere. Eventually, the grey ooze was covered by a sawdust mixture as the staff person soothed my guilty thoughts and told me that not only does it happen all the time, but, indeed, the design of the cart is a bit misleading, as most people do not realize the back is open so that smaller items can fall through – as did the can of paint.

So what is the association between the fall not from "grace" as exists in Christian liturgy but to paraphrase, a fall from a higher place? This brings me to the association. For the elderly patients I care for, one of the most devastating events that can occur in their lives is a fall, from almost any height, that results in either a major fracture or an injury, for example to the head, and the resultant loss of independence and what has often been termed the "fear of falling."

Thus, the focus by all of us involved in eldercare as family or health-care professionals is to promote safe mobility and decrease fall risk: such as at home, especially doing a washroom safety check, and the use of mobility aids to provide as much security as possible.

Take heed, preventing falls is crucial. The result is not as simple as picking up spilled tomatoes or splattered grey paint: it can result in a life change that no one wants to experience. ■

Mazel Tov!

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Happy 94th birthday Annie Shaffer! Love and hugs from Rhonda, Bob, Melissa and Benjamin Herman; and Melvin Shaffer.

Rachel Alter & David Chouela were married by Rabbi Ronnie Cahana at Congregation Beth-El in Montreal on Aug. 24.

The Goldwasser and Ruby families are thrilled to announce the arrival of Geri Stephanie born Aug. 10 to Aaron & Michelle.

Bert & Marilyn Raphael set a wonderful example for 60 years! Love, Sheree and Stuart; Mark, Debbie, Alexis, Corey; Lisa, Ed, Daniel, Sam and Jordyn

Happy Birthday to the best friend, Kara! Mazel tov till 120! Love, your family and friends.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to chleckman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

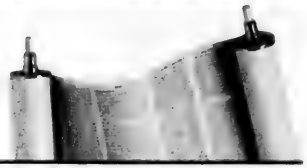
Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Happy 50th birthday, dear Hakob! Mazel tov! May this and every day of the year be special, extraordinary, magical, unforgettable!

Parshah

Vayelech | Deuteronomy 31:1–30



Yacov Fruchter explains why confession is an important aspect in the repentance process
Rabbi Shalom Spira wonders whether Moses really authored the final verses of the Torah
Rachael Turkienicz suggests that the Torah acts as an eternal meeting place for our souls

Yacov Fruchter

I'm sitting in Emmanuel College, the United Church building at University of Toronto as I write this. Though we usually associate confession with Christian practice, a central component of our Yom Kippur experience is the *Viddui* confession ceremony.

With our backs slightly hunched over, we beat our chests with each mention of the word "*Chatanu* – We have sinned," and sing loudly, "For all these sins, forgiving God, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement."

Rambam explains that confession is a vital component of tshuvah – repentance, and without it, our repentance is not complete and our desired increased closeness to God will not be reached. As most of us only experience this kind of confession one day a year, it can feel foreign. So why do we do it, and why is it important for us to go through these motions throughout Yom Kippur?

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel explains that the essence of confession is the feeling of shame that ensues. "What the world needs is a sense of embarrassment. We are guilty of misunderstanding the meaning of existence; we are guilty of distorting our goals and misrepresenting our souls." He argues that we need this humbling experience to reorient ourselves within our personal goals and our mandate as Jews and citizens of the earth.

He also offers an explanation for the reason that the list of transgressions is written in plural form, as well as our need to confess for sins that might not be among our personal errors. While some suggest that we are guilty of all sins in some form, Rabbi Heschel uses this tradition to remind us of our collective responsibility for the other. He writes: "Few are guilty, all are responsible."

May this be a year in which our sense of shame opens us up to a greater feeling of responsibility and dedication to the collective good, and may we all be blessed with the sweetest of new years. ■

Yacov Fruchter is director of community building and spiritual engagement at Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

"Take this Torah scroll" (Deut. 31:26). The Gemara (Bava Batra 15a), grapples with the paradox of how Moses could have transcribed the final eight verses of the Torah scroll, which describe his own death. Rabbi Yehudah/Nechemiah insists that they were actually written by Joshua. Rabbi Shimon counters by invoking Deut. 31:26, which proves that the scroll must have already been complete. After all, a Torah scroll missing even one word would not be kosher. Rather, continues Rabbi Shimon, even the last verses were written by Moses, albeit *bedema* (literally "with tears," but alternatively "in a jumbled form").

Rabbi Moshe Sofer (*Torat Mosheh*, third edition) to Deut. 34:5, elucidates *bedema* based on an oral tradition from the Vilna Gaon. Nachmanides (introduction to Pentateuch) comments that the Torah scroll existed before Creation as black fire written on white fire. The Vilna Gaon explains that whereas the Torah is eternal, it catalogues events that unfolded within our space-time continuum. As each event materialized, the portion of the scroll describing that event became legible to human observers. Those portions describing future events remained "jumbled," in other words, unintelligible to any human observer other than a prophet. Rabbi Sofer concludes that both opinions are true: Moses wrote the ultimate verses in a jumbled form, and then Joshua rewrote them legibly.

Interestingly, the Gemara (Kiddushin 29b) records a dispute between Rabbi Yehudah and the sages on whether a Torah scroll has the status of a commercial IOU document (*shtar*). Rabbi Yehudah holds to the affirmative. Elsewhere, the Gemara (Ketubot 21b), posits that when a court supervises the preparation of a *shtar*, the court must avoid *mitchazei keshikra*, or the "appearance of falsehood," by prematurely signing on future events. It is thus appropriate why specifically Rabbi Yehudah would express dismay about the final verses, and why the solution resides in their being jumbled, thereby negating the "appearance" (literally) of falsehood. ■

Rabbi Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

There is a beautiful midrash connected with this week's parshah that brings us to the essence of Yom Kippur. Moses is preparing for his death and has been addressing the nation with various messages.

Moses' greatest fear is that without him, Israel will turn against God, forget the Covenant and force a horrible outcome. Moses has warned them, threatened them, pleaded with them, and now he is recording everything in written form, in what we know as the Torah.

There is a discussion among the sages as to how many Torah scrolls Moses wrote at that time. The consensus is that he wrote 13 scrolls, one for each tribe and one extra. Some sages say that the extra Torah scroll was placed in the Ark of the Covenant. The Torah says it was placed next to the Ark. The midrash says that the angel Gabriel picked up the scroll and brought it to the Upper Realms.

The question is why the Upper Realms would need a Torah scroll. In fact, earlier in the Torah, when Moses receives the Ten Commandments, one midrash discusses how Moses proves to the angels that they do not need the Law. With that resolved, why would Gabriel bring the Torah scroll upward?

But it is not the angels who need the Torah. Rather, the sages say that the righteous souls above continue to read, study and chant the Torah at the times that we do. In other words, the Torah becomes an everlasting meeting place for all our souls.

As Yom Kippur approaches, we are reminded that the stakes could not be higher and it is possible to lose someone we love in the coming year. Modern society makes us feel that once someone has died they are lost to us forever. Judaism teaches us that when souls connect, they connect eternally. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto.

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Give thanks for the abundant harvest during Sukkot

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SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Unlike Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, the week-long festival beginning at sundown Sept. 27, actually is mentioned in the Torah (Leviticus 23:34-39). Immediately following the fast of Yom Kippur, Jews the world over begin constructing sukkot (booths) in preparation for the joyous feast that begins four days later. How our forefathers must have rejoiced to enjoy the fruits of their labours, closer to the heavens, as the growing season culminated in bushels of plenty.

Jewish cuisine, at least in the Mediterranean, has had a long love affair with vegetables, and what better way to celebrate this thanksgiving of the harvest than with a trip to your local farmers' market.

Today I accompany Amelia Saltsman – writer, cooking teacher and author of *The Santa Monica Farmers' Market Cookbook* (Blenheim Press) on a stroll through the market. But there are frequent interruptions, because this is the Santa Monica Farmers' Market, and Saltsman is the undisputed queen of this market and instantly recognized by farmers and shoppers alike.

Every grower greets Saltsman, who has immortalized them in her cookbook, which is a homage to the farmers, and a collection of fuss-less, original and artful recipes inspired by the amazing varieties they produce.

Now Saltsman has combined her expertise on all things growing and her love of her Jewish heritage in her new cookbook, *The Seasonal Jewish Kitchen* (Sterling Epicure), with recipes from both her Romanian mother's and her Iraqi father's families, and seasonal spins on such favourites as Roast Chicken with Tangerines, Green Olives and Silan; Marinated Chickpea Salad with Tahini and Lemon Sauce; Golden Borscht with Buttermilk and Ginger; and Apple, Pear and Concord Grape Galette in Rye Pastry.

Persimmon, pomegranate and pecan salad

Source: *The Santa Monica Farmers' Market Cookbook by Amelia Saltsman*

- ❑ 1 pomegranate
- ❑ 4 ribs celery, preferably inner, whiter ribs with leaves
- ❑ 2 small or 1 large persimmon
- ❑ 1/2 cup pecan or walnut pieces, toasted
- ❑ 1/2 lb. mixed baby salad greens
- ❑ about 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil or nut oil
- ❑ 1 lemon
- ❑ kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ❑ 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese (optional)

To remove pomegranate kernels, make a cut near blossom end of fruit, submerge pomegranate in bowl of water, and break fruit into large pieces. Use your fingers to loosen kernels, then drain and reserve. They will keep refrigerated up to 3 days.

Use vegetable peeler to peel celery, then slice paper-thin on diagonal. Place in salad bowl along with leaves.

Core persimmon, cut vertically into quarters, then crosswise into thin slices. Add to bowl along with nuts, greens and as many pomegranate kernels as you like.

Grate zest from lemon in long, thin strands into bowl. Drizzle on oil, squeeze in lemon juice and season with salt and pepper. Toss well and sprinkle with cheese, if using. Yield: 8 servings.

Gvetch: roasted Romanian ratatouille

Source: *The Seasonal Jewish Kitchen by Amelia Saltsman*

- ❑ 2 lb. fleshy sauce tomatoes such as Roma
- ❑ 4-6 medium-size green or white zucchini (about 1-1/2 lb.)
- ❑ 2 medium eggplants (about 1-1/2 lb. total)
- ❑ 3 or 4 sweet red peppers
- ❑ 1 or 2 onions, peeled
- ❑ 6-8 large garlic cloves, peeled
- ❑ 1 tbsp. sweet or hot paprika, or a mix
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. ground cumin
- ❑ 2 bay leaves
- ❑ 3-4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- ❑ about 2 tsp. kosher or sea salt
- ❑ freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400. Roughly chop tomatoes, zucchini, eggplants, sweet peppers and onions into about 1-in. pieces. Transfer vegetables to large roasting pan with garlic, paprika, cumin, bay leaves, olive oil and several grinds of pepper. Toss to mix; spread evenly. Roast without stirring until vegetables are very tender and browned in places and tomatoes have melted into a thick sauce, about 1 hour. Serve warm or at room temperature. ■

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring: applying Jewish ethics to journalism

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Earlier this month, Rabbi Jonathan Ziring joined *CJN* editor Yoni Goldstein at Toronto's Yeshivat B'nei Akiva Or Chaim in a debate about the relationship between Judaism and journalism ethics.

Some of the questions debated were: in what ways does journalism contribute positively to society? How does one reconcile the impulse of journalism to report with the Jewish value of maintaining privacy? How should a Jewish newspaper walk the line between reporting wrongdoing and avoiding portraying Judaism in a bad light? When is a Jewish community newspaper entitled to put the public interest ahead of the interests of innocent third parties? Is it possible for a newspaper to promote a particular perspective on a given issue and still report the facts of that issue impartially?

Rabbi Ziring, a Staten Island-native, received his bachelor's degree from Yeshiva University's Yeshiva College in philosophy and Jewish studies, his master's from the Bernard Revel Graduate School in Jewish Philosophy, and smichah from Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS).

As a fellow with the Tikvah Fund, a non-profit group that offers grants to promote Jewish scholarship, Rabbi Ziring developed an extensive theory of journalistic ethics from a halachic perspective.

Over the next two years, Rabbi Ziring will be living in Toronto and will serve as a sgan rosh beit midrash at Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov of Toronto, an organization that aims to educate the Jewish community by applying Torah values to modern issues through classes and discussions.

In an interview with *The CJN*, Rabbi Ziring spoke about the some of the ethical issues that Jewish journalists must grapple with.

Where does your familiarity with journalism ethics come from?

A few years ago, I taught a class once a week at the Columbia University Hillel, and they ended up asking me to give a series on journalism, so I gave a semester-long series there, and then three years ago, I was a fellow at the Tikvah Fund and they were intrigued by the series I had given at Columbia and asked me, for their research project with them, to turn it into a written project, a series of articles that I put together and have been in the process of getting published since then.

I spent the year working on that with Neal Kozodoy, the former editor at *Commentary*, as one of my guides from the journalistic perspective and Rabbi Mark Gottlieb, who is the senior director at the Tikvah Fund.

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring applies Torah values to modern issues through classes and discussion.

Does it complicate things to look at media ethics through the lens of Jewish values?

It definitely complicates things. We start with a language problem on one level. Getting the conversation started is always difficult, because you have to change your frame of reference.

One you've gotten past that initial hurdle, there is a lot of room to bring the two into conversation. Jewish law and philosophy has much to say on these ethical questions that arise in media ethics.

There is a debate among different ethicists about using anonymous sourcing, for example.

Jewish law has a strong position, where, except in the most extenuating of circumstances, it opposes it.

What legitimates our belief in someone when he says that someone else did something wrong is the fact that he is willing to put his name on the line. And hiding behind anonymity would force us to draw into question his honesty and integrity in the situation. That's a small example.

There is a divergence of law, of libel law, in western countries. In America, for example, the right of the public to know is so great that we can't hinder the ability of the press to publicize information with overly exacting libel law. So in America, it is impossible to really convict someone of libel – you have to prove not only that the information was incorrect, but that there was malice. It's very rarely successfully litigated.

> *Jewish law has something to say on this balance, on the importance of whether the right of the public to know was so great as to minimize the rights of an individual's privacy.*

In the Canadian Supreme Court and British Supreme Court, that hasn't been the case. These supreme courts have found, in both countries, that the press, more often, needs to prove the necessity for the public good before they have the right to publicize something that is defamatory. Jewish law has something to say on this balance, on the importance of whether the right of the public to know was so great as to minimize the rights of an individual's privacy.

When I was researching, it was helpful to bring into conversation this divergence of law.

How should a Jewish newspaper navigate a situation where reporting on an issue may be of public interest, but have negative consequences for a person, institution or community in general?

When you punish a criminal, you need to get him off the streets, and you know this will affect the family, but there is nothing you can do, because society has to take responsibility.

Sometimes it is going to be inevitable, that information needs to get out. On the other hand, we should want to balance it. If on some level, the ethical justification of the right of the public to know was the belief that on some level it will improve society, it's definitely a hard ethical and legal call to make, with different decisions calling for different balances.

There is a passage in the Talmud about preventing the desecration of the name of God. It talks about a hypocrite, someone who parades himself about as a righteous person, but is in fact, a criminal behind closed doors. At least some of the commentary says it means that the existence of people like that, even if no one knows about it, is in itself a desecration of God's name and it has to be undone. There is a positive value of people knowing that good people are good and bad people are bad.

People in the Jewish community might say, "How could you publicize that this person was abusive? You're causing a desecration of God by publicizing it."

The Talmud says that you publicize that type of thing, because if you don't, *that* is a desecration of God's name. So the Talmud has the opposite position, which is that publicizing the abuse was not a desecration, but the desecration was when the person committed the crime to begin with. The way to rectify it is by rooting it out and bringing it to light. That may not be the most popular thing to say in the Jewish community. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Yom Kippur with St. Francis of Assisi

Backstory

EROL ARAF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Silent shadows draped in dark brown Franciscan robes passed by the two frescoes of the life of Isaac by Giotto in the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi and ascended the Romanesque tower of the upper church to look out for German forces that might crawl along the serpentine road in the valley below.

The date was Oct. 9, 1943: northern Italy had been occupied by Hitler after the overthrow of Mussolini and the hunt for Jews was in full swing.

It was also the night of Yom Kippur.

In the Basilica of Saint Francis, nuns and priests who were about to break bread with Jewish refugees seeking succour in churches, convents, living quarters of clergy and monasteries throughout Assisi, had done their best to prepare a meagre meal while respecting the dietary laws of Moses.

As the autumn lights retreated over the hill towns of Tuscany, the Jews recited silently the *Kol Nidrei* in a small and secret enclosure, not far from the crypt of Saint Francis. There was no Ark to be opened, no two people to take two Torah scrolls; and no cantor to storm the Heavens. But, as guests they had ample opportunity to behold the beautiful Old Testament paintings adorning the nave of the ancient church featuring in two rows a total of 32 scenes starting, among others, with *Creation of the World, Isaac, Jacob and Esau* and *Joseph Forgives his Brothers*.

While they pondered their fate on the eve of the Day of Atonement, the question as to who would be inscribed in the Book of Life became laden with foreboding. Who would live and who would die – who by fire and who by water, who by the sword and who by wild beasts? Who, indeed, by the sword and who by wild beasts? And yet, in spite of the conflicting emotions raging in their troubled souls, in the fledgling light of reticent candles, they must have discerned the colour of hope in faces of the righteous among them who were risking their own lives.

As the SS hounds roamed the hills of Tuscany in search of prey, the good people hailing from the good earth of Italy succeeded in instilling a palpable sense of optimism in the minds of the refugees who were drowning in despair only a few days before.

> *The entire town of Assisi had been turned into a sanctuary for Jews*

And they were right to hope, in the midst of hope-defying adversity, when they saw that the entire town of Assisi had been turned into a sanctuary for Jews. Jewish babies were born, old people died and received secret Jewish burials in unmarked graves, young couples married, the sick were treated, the hungry fed, the naked clothed and the frightened comforted.

But danger was the constant and faithful companion of these hapless souls.

There were close calls. By 1944, the SS had unleashed a relentless hunt in German-occupied Italy although it was by then clear that the Nazis would soon lose the war.

In February of that year, according to Peter J. Ognibene writing in *Italian America* about the Assisi Underground, the elaborate operation to save Jews hiding in Assisi was on the verge of collapsing. Three Jewish refugees and an Italian deserter who were running the fake documentation office were arrested. Although they were later released, thanks to the powerful intervention of church authorities, the clergy in charge of the basilica could not take the risk and told the refugees to gather their belongings and immediately follow the warden through medieval tunnels into forests and caverns.

These were the very caverns carved into mountains and secret grottoes bedazzled with subterranean lakes and waterfalls that had once sheltered St. Francis and his followers. They stayed for a week and returned when it became clear that the rescue effort had not been betrayed.

Who were these good people of the good earth? They were Msgr. Giuseppe Nicolini, the Bishop of Assisi; Col. Valentin Muller, a Catholic Wehrmacht medical doctor whose secret help saved so many lives; and Don Aldo Brunacci, the Bishop's secretary who organized the entire underground rescue mission.

All those who prayed on Yom Kippur in 1943 in the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi were inscribed in the Book of Life. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

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Tsilia Berguer	Sep 1/15	541 Finch Avenue, West
Jacob Helman	Sep 2/15	179 Brighton Avenue
David Sherman (Savoy)	Sep 2/15	40 Homewood Avenue
Helena Snidman	Sep 2/15	7 Forest Ridge Drive
Alan Zender	Sep 3/15	541 Finch Avenue, West
Gordon (Gordie) Goldman	Sep 4/15	555 Russell Hill Road
Jacques Israelievitch	Sep 5/15	75 Hilton Avenue

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Inside

Election 2015

CJPAC says the time to volunteer is now. **PAGE 14**
Farewell to an icon. **PAGE 15**

Daycare closures put parents in a bind

Some Jewish programs aren't in compliance with new provincial child care rules. **PAGE 12**

Havdalah

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	6:48 p.m.	7:49 p.m.
Montreal	6:28 p.m.	7:29 p.m.
Ottawa	6:37 p.m.	7:38 p.m.
Toronto	6:51 p.m.	7:52 p.m.
Winnipeg	7:02 p.m.	8:06 p.m.
Calgary	7:09 p.m.	8:15 p.m.
Vancouver	6:46 p.m.	7:50 p.m.

Heavenly high

What does Jewish law have to say about smoking pot? **PAGE 8**

Canada Park wasn't stolen: ex-envoy

Former Israeli ambassador Alan Baker defends JNF's stewardship of the land. **PAGE 7**

The stunning rise of Maccabi Tel Aviv

Canadian owner leads culture shift. **PAGE 20**
Taking on Europe's best. **PAGE 34**

Back by popular demand...

Gerry Kane's Yiddish Corner returns to the pages of *The CJN*. **PAGE 31**

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Naked outrage, and Coulter and Khamenei tweet about Jews

Student awarded $1M in abuse case

Hadassah Ehrlich, a former student at a haredi day school in Melbourne, Australia, who says she was sexually abused by the principal was awarded $1 million in damages from the Adass Israel School Sept. 16. The judge said actions by the school to help former principal Malka Leifer flee Australia in 2008 were "deplorable and disgraceful." Allegations against Leifer surfaced after she left Australia, and the school has been criticized for not contacting police. Leifer was arrested in Israel and faces extradition on 74 charges of sexual abuse against girls at the school. Ehrlich sued for offences that allegedly started in 2002, when she was 15.

Like peas in a f—ing Twitter pod

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and American conservative pundit Ann Coulter have at least one thing in common: they think the U.S. Republican party panders to Jews. Referring to last week's Republican presidential debate, Khamenei decried on Twitter that "presidential candidates try to satisfy Zionists." In a related tweet, he repeated a claim he made earlier this month that Israel will not last. During the Sept. 18 debate itself, Coulter expressed frustration with multiple pledges to support Israel, tweeting: "How many f—ing Jews do these people think there are in the United States?" After being criticized, she said her comment was taken out of context, adding she's pro-Israel and the debate played into stereotypes about Jewish power while wasting time on issues the party agrees on.

Ann Coulter's in hot water over a tweet

Body issues in the Holy Land

Not everyone in the Middle East appreciates the human form, it seems. Photos posted Sept. 16 of Spanish pro-Palestinian activists posing naked in protest of the West Bank security barrier were called disrespectful and caused unintended outrage on Palestinian social media, in part because they were taken near a Ramallah mosque. On the other side of the fence, inspired by *ESPN The Magazine*'s annual body issue, *Yediot Achronot* earlier this month published artful naked pictures of 14 top Israeli athletes by fashion photographer Gabriel Baharlia. No word about a Twitter backlash.■

Inside today's edition

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COVER ILLUSTRATION BY TREVOR MILLER

Gematria

$387,000

The amount actor Brad Pitt paid for a Nazi motorbike from a Greek collector.

1,000

The number of nightly guests during the 1950s heyday of Hoberg's Resort, a.k.a. the "Catskills of the West." Hoberg's was destroyed by a California wildfire Sept. 12.

Quotable

We really have to find a way to explain to people that it doesn't help the security of Israel to have Canada only support the most right-wing party in Israel.

— Green party Leader Elizabeth May. See full interview on p. 42.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz looks at the no-longer-in-force mitzvah of *hakhel*, the assembling of the Jewish People.

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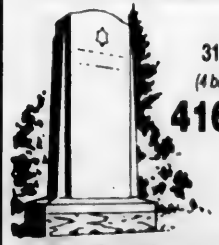

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Letters to the Editor

Choose refugees wisely

If, as Bernie Farber believes, Canada should become an "open haven for refugees fleeing persecution," ("Jewish groups urge Ottawa to help Syrian refugees," Sept. 10), then we should concentrate on bringing in the groups who most clearly qualify as persecuted: Syrian and Iraqi Christians and Yazidis.

War in one's homeland is not an automatic ticket to refugee status, and eventual citizenship, in Canada. After all, there were plenty of ordinary Germans who wanted to leave Germany at the end of World War II. Where Canada's government failed was not in refusing to let in more of them, but in failing to let in any Jews at all five years before.

Steve Mitchell
Toronto

Jews do not vote blindly

A letter to the editor claimed that Jews have blindly voted Liberal for the last 100 years ("Who is best for the Jews?", Sept. 10) but in the same issue, columnist Howard Adelman writes, "Why the Tories are winning the Jewish vote." I take issue with both these views.

Jews do not vote blindly. The only blind devotion is the view that because Prime Minister Stephen Harper has been vocal about his support for Israel, Jews should vote Conservative.

Without a doubt, Harper's support of Israel has been outstanding.

But what about Harper's multi-billion dollar arms deal with Saudi Arabia, whose human rights abuses include beheadings? Or the fact that this same government sold the Canadian Wheat Board to a company that is also, in part, owned by Saudi Arabia.

Harper's lack of leadership on issues such as climate change, support for the scientific community in environmental research, veterans affairs and missing aboriginal women has been abominable. Canadian Jews should not be blinded by one issue only.

April Laufer
Toronto

United Church responds

The United Church of Canada is concerned that the Canadian Rabbinic Caucus understands our actions in relation to justice and peace in Israel and Palestine to be a barrier to interfaith dialogue here in Canada ("Christians and Jews," Sept. 3).

We remain committed to dialogue with people of all faiths, in the spirit of the affirmations made in our 1997 statement, Mending the World, in which we have laid out the framework for our engagement in ecumenical and interfaith relations.

The recent actions of the General Council are consistent with United Church policy since the 1970s, and with the call of partners in Israel and Palestine who seek justice and peace through non-violent means. Our partners include Jewish voices who have denounced continued expansion of illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian territory, house demolitions and other violations of the human rights of Palestinians. The actions of the General Council reaffirm United Church policy calling for safety and security for Israel within internationally recognized borders. The action does not target Israel. Rather, the focus is Israeli policies and practices relating to the occupation of Palestinian territories.

Partners in both Israel and Palestine insist that it is only with the end of occupation that any real possibility of coexistence, reconciliation, and economic co-operation will be generated. With the General Council action, the United Church joins with many other organizations and people around the world who view economic action not as a measure of coercion or punishment, but as a peaceful, non-violent way to press for change that will bring about peace with justice for Israelis and Palestinians. Such actions call us as consumers and investors to end our complicity in government and corporate policies and practices that maintain the occupation and its terrible cost in the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians.

We acknowledge the challenges that our differences on these difficult issues create for maintaining dialogue. Nevertheless, we would value opportunities, formal or informal, to engage in conversation with the Canadian Rabbinic Caucus and with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and to discover areas of concern we may share. It is our hope that we can continue to be in dialogue with all who pray and yearn for justice and peace in Israel-Palestine.

Gail Allan, Co-ordinator Ecumenical, Interchurch and Interfaith Relations, United Church of Canada
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**
We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.

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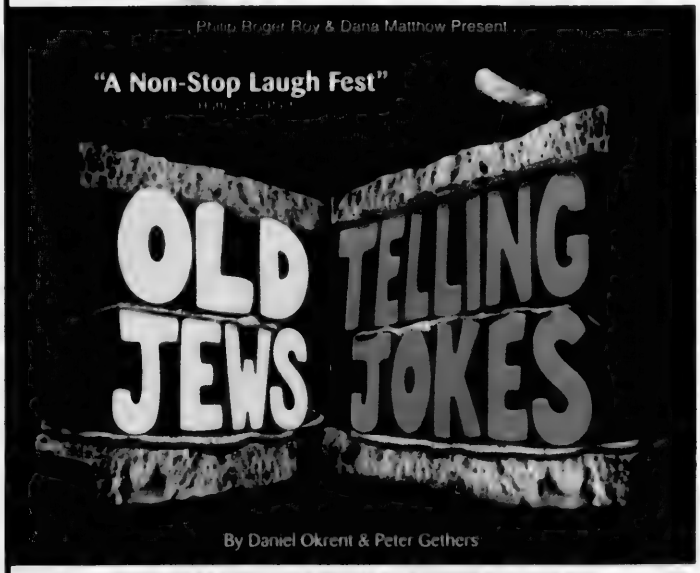

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Jewish living, inside and out

Sukkot reminds us that synagogues must empower Jews to lead meaningful lives beyond their walls, too

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Scheier: Recently, I have begun a program called "Pop-Up Rabbi," where I stand outside a local coffee shop next to a sign that invites passers-by to "ask a rabbi any question."

The interactions have been extraordinarily meaningful, and the initiative has been well-received. It's an example of a synagogue expanding its horizons and moving beyond the comfort zone of its bricks-and-mortar building.

This, I believe, is part of the message of Sukkot – that our religious life isn't to be confined to our buildings. We step out of our comfort zones and engage those outside or on the periphery.

How have you seen this idea effectively implemented in your community?

Rabbi Cutler: Beth Tzedec is a believer in out-of-the-shul Judaism – both myself and Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl have held programs in coffee shops. We have also taught classes in places of business during lunch hours. Purim parties have taken place in music venues and the Megillah has been read at a local kosher restaurant. These initiatives are usually designed to be short-lived. Once the novelty wears off, we try something new.

Our shuls are buildings, but they represent ideas and fulfil missions. I believe that we are tasked with driving forward the mission in the best way possible. We need buildings for our mission, but we also need at times to step out of them. What you are describing is bringing the inside out, taking what is core to us and bringing it to the public.

What about the other way? Should we also be trying to bring the outside in? Should shuls be doing more to drive traffic into our building? Should we be catering more to the general public?

Rabbi Scheier: Yes, our buildings are holy tools used to convey a holy message. Jewish thought emphasizes the power of sacred space – the power to inspire and to serve as a focal point for communal activity and vision.

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach shared a beautiful teaching about the Neilah service that concludes Yom Kippur. Neilah, which literally means "locking (of the gates)," is traditionally understood as the locking of the gates of prayer – as in, don't lock us out. But Rabbi Carlebach said that it could be the opposite, too – don't lock us in!

The message for me is that Jewish life belongs everywhere – in coffee shops, in the workplace, and, of course, in the home. While many of our outreach initiatives might be short-lived, the message of Judaism's reach can be profound.

Perhaps one way to accomplish this ideal is to teach a form of Judaism inside the synagogue that can be easily implemented outside the synagogue as well.

What is the "take home message" you would like your congregants to leave shul with?

Rabbi Cutler: At our family-oriented Shabbat dinners, we recently began distributing cards to be taken home. The cards are designed to assist families in at-home Shabbat rituals – the blessing of the children, *Kiddush*, *Hamotzi*, etc. As rabbis, we are tasked with empowering Jews to live Jewish lives at shul, but also at home and in their day-to-day lives.

In a saying by Moses Mendelsohn that has been eternalized by Y.L. Gordon, one is instructed to be "a Jew at home and a man on the street." But this is a sentiment that does not sit well with me (even if neither Mendelsohn nor Gordon meant to take it to its extreme) – lived Judaism is not meant to limit itself to certain geographical locales, be they the home, the synagogue or elsewhere. Instead, lived Judaism is meant to permeate all aspects of our lives, wherever we may find ourselves.

A synagogue that can inspire such a Judaism – irrespective of whether encounters with rabbis take place in the building or beyond – will be one that achieves tremendous success. ■

How to reach us

Vol. XLV, No. 37 (2,213)*

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Advertising e-mail: adscjn@gmail.com **Website:** www.cjnews.com
Subscription inquiries: 416-932-5095
Toll Free: 1-866-849-0864 **Fax:** 416-932-2488
E-mail: cjncontact@gmail.com
Sales, National & Toronto Local: Canadian Primedia, 416-922-3605

Israeli Advertising Representative:
IMP, Tel: 02-625-2933, E-mail: info@impmedia.co.il

Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation:
July 14, 2015

Canadian Heritage / Patrimoine canadien

Postmaster: Please return 29Bs and changes of address to CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7
Postage Paid at Toronto Canada Post Publication Agreement #40010684
*Under current ownership

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage

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An independent community newspaper serving as a forum for diverse viewpoints

Publisher and Proprietor: The Canadian Jewish News, a corporation without share capital. Head Office: 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord Ont. L4K 2L7

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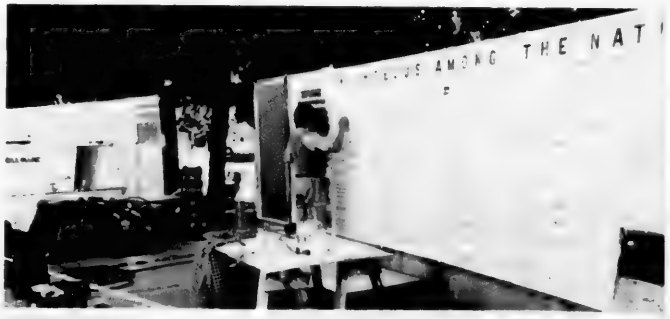
From the Archives | Philanthropists

Ida Siegel with Edmund Scheuer at the Canadian Jewish Farm School, Georgetown, Ont., circa 1927. The school was a training site for Polish war orphans brought to Canada after World War I. Siegel, one of the most effective volunteer leaders in the history of Toronto's Jewish community, and Scheuer, a philanthropist and father of Reform Judaism in Canada, were most likely at the school event because of their mutual interest and involvement in aiding Jewish immigrants and in Jewish education and training.

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

SeeJN | Holocaust memorial renovations



RON CSILLAG PHOTO

A workman puts finishing touches on a wall commemorating the Righteous Among the Nations, gentiles who rescued Jews in the Shoah. The wall is among several new additions to the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Earl Bales Park. In all, the site will have more than 30 new elements, including walls, pillars, gardens, monuments, and a six-branched Yad Vashem menorah in the central square. The renovation campaign began two years ago, with work starting last spring. The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem will host a Yizkor service Oct. 4 at the site, when the new elements will be unveiled.

From Yoni's Desk

Jewish journalists: the next generation

On March 26, 2006, I received an email from then-*Canadian Jewish News* editor Mordechai Ben-Dat. "Dear Yoni," it began, "Are you ready to roll?"

It was the break I'd been waiting for, a chance to publish to a national audience my opinions about the Jewish community, and hopefully spur conversation about the future of Jewish life in Canada, the Diaspora and Israel. "You will have a wide berth to discuss whatever issues of Jewish life you deem relevant," he added in a followup email. "Please give us your voice."

For the next three years, my byline appeared once a month on the inside back page of *The CJN*, in a space called "New Views" (the title came from Mordechai; the accompanying picture was entirely my fault). The column covered familiar topics, like the topsy-turvy world of Israeli politics and the challenges of Jewish education, as well as emerging issues like the early days of what would come to be called the open Orthodox movement, modern Yiddish culture and child abuse.

Mordechai and *The CJN's* editing team always employed a gentle hand, even when I tested their limits with copy that shot from the hip and offered little nuance on complicated issues. On the few occasions when they did step in, it was to save me from myself.

Looking back on those "New Views" columns recently, the thing that struck me the most was my tone. It was unabashedly snarky, critical, sarcastic, contemptuous, mocking, even mean at times. I was in my mid-20s, trying to find my way personally and professionally, and that came across in my words. I sounded angry, and frustrated by the continuing dominance in the Jewish community of what I perceived to be old and outdated ideas.

A lot has changed in the near-decade since that first column was published. I'm older now, a husband and a father, and my perspective has changed somewhat.

But even so, I'd like to think that *The Canadian Jewish News* still embodies the spirit of "New Views," at least a little. And I hope *The CJN* can continue to play a role in helping young Jewish writers find their voices, the same way it helped me discover mine.

I feel strongly that one of our most important ongoing projects at *The CJN* is to tap into the energy and vitality of youth, and to foster the development of young Jewish writers and activists. It's the best way I can think of for us to help cultivate the next generation of Canadian Jewish leaders. Jewish journalism, as I argued last week, is of great benefit to our community because it empowers individuals, especially young people.

Young writers can sometimes be hard to stomach. The sorts of opinions they tend to express – the sorts of opinions I once expressed in "New Views" – are not always easy for everyone to hear. But that's the spirit of youth for you. I truly believe that we need to take every opportunity we have to encourage and nurture our young people, even when the ideas they express sting or seem counter-intuitive. A few new views here and there never hurt anyone. ■ — YONI

OPINION

Canada Park wasn't stolen from the Palestinians

Alan Baker

In light of some serious misconceptions in Mira Sucharov's column ("Is it time to have a debate about the JNF?"Aug. 6), according to which the land on which the Jewish National Fund-administered Canada Park is located was illegally stolen from Palestinians in contravention of the Geneva Convention, the following points need to be made.

The land, including the former Arab villages that existed in what is now Canada Park, was never part of any Palestinian state or entity. No such entity has ever existed, and hence the land could not have been "stolen" from a non-existent entity that neither owned nor occupied it.

During the 1948-49 War of Independence, in which, as is widely known, Israel defended itself from a combined attack by neighbouring and local Arab forces, the area in question, including the villages that were located there, together with units of the Jordanian army, played an active and strategic role in blocking the route to Jerusalem and in attacking and bombarding both Jerusalem itself and convoys driving to and from Jerusalem.

In the 1949 Jordan-Israel armistice agreement, which terminated the hostilities but left the issue of "territorial settlements or boundary lines" open for future peace negotiations, the Latrun area, including what is now Canada Park, was determined as "No-Man's Land" and a demilitarized zone between the forward lines of the forces, with strict limitations on any military presence or activity therein, and remained so until the 1967 Six Day War.

The armistice demarcation line has never been considered to be a border and has never been so designated by United Nations agencies or governments, including Canada.

Canada Park preserves the area's natural and historic character, including remnants from the Hasmonean and Second Temple periods. FILE PHOTOS

During the course of the Six Day War, in which Jordan, despite Israeli pleas not to do so, attacked Israel, the area fell under Israel's control and administration, together with the other West Bank areas of Judea and Samaria. In light of its strategic location commanding the main route to Jerusalem and the vital security implications involved, and in accordance with Israel's rights pursuant to the rules of armed conflict, the area was declared by Israel to be a closed military area under strict military control, and the presence of the few civilians who remained after the majority had chosen to leave was prohibited.

Since then, as part of its ongoing administration of the area, Israel has undertaken to observe the relevant norms of international humanitarian law, pending a final peace agreement and ultimate disposition of the territory. Any claims that Israel has annexed the area are without any basis. By the same token, any Palestinian claims that this area is part of a Palestinian state is utterly wrong.

This area, together with all other areas that fell under Israel's control in 1967, are the subject of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiation process pursuant to the 1993-95 Oslo accords signed by the Palestinian leadership and Israel, and endorsed and witnessed by the major powers and regional and international organizations.

Therefore the legal status of the area – including the area in which Canada Park is located – is pending negotiation. It cannot be denominated as "Palestinian territory," since the Palestinians themselves are committed to negotiating the permanent status of the area with Israel. It is therefore governed by the special regime agreed upon by the Palestinians and Israel under the Oslo accords.

In this framework, the Palestinians have agreed that Israel continues to maintain full territorial control and jurisdiction over "Area C," in which Canada Park is located, subject to the outcome of the negotiations on permanent status of the territory. Negotiations will presumably cover the fate of the area in question.

As such, any claim that Israel's administration of Canada Park is in violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention has no basis in fact or law, since the convention is not applicable.

The area of Canada Park contains remnants of Jewish Hasmonean and Second Temple presence, including burial caves and ritual baths, as well as of Roman and Crusader antiquities from later periods. Clearly, once the negotiations on the permanent status of the areas are resumed, such historic considerations will be part and parcel of the respective claims of the parties.

Maintaining the area as a park in which its natural and historic character, integrity and heritage are preserved and protected, falls squarely within the requirements of international humanitarian law and cannot in any way be described as a violation of the Geneva Convention.

Therefore any claim that Canada Park is in any way a violation of international law has no absolutely legal basis and is an utter misconception. ■

Alan Baker served as the legal adviser to Israel's Foreign Ministry and Israel's ambassador to Canada (2004-08). He participated in all the negotiations between Israel and its neighbours on the drafting of the various peace treaties and other agreements. He is currently director of the Institute for Contemporary Affairs at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

Correction

The picture in the story "Laying my mother to rest" (Sept. 10) incorrectly identified the author's mother. Her name is Eve Wolfman. We regret the error.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

The complicated halachahs of getting high

As the marijuana legalization movement gains steam, where does the Jewish community stand?

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

It's the end of a long workday and Erez (not his real name) meets me at an uptown Toronto subway station.

We drive to a nearby park, making conversation about work, family and, eventually, about pot.

"My stuff is really good," he tells me, indicating the rolled joint tucked behind his ear.

Erez, 32, is soft-spoken, with an air of quiet intelligence.

He was raised in a traditional Jewish household in Toronto and brought up to be kosher and shomer Shabbat. His family belonged to an Orthodox synagogue and after high school, he attended yeshiva.

There, he said, pot was fairly prevalent.

"I think drugs of all kinds are everywhere," Erez shrugged.

He continues to identify as religious, observing Shabbat and kashrut and donning tfillin each morning before davening.

He has a stable job, is a burgeoning business owner and smokes pot daily – always after work, but never on Shabbat.

"I think marijuana enables one to become slightly more compassionate, more sensitive and accepting, characteristics that line up with Judaism," Erez said thoughtfully when I asked if his weed habit interferes with his commitment to Jewish observance.

While the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), the North American rabbinical association affiliated with modern Orthodoxy, hasn't taken an official position on marijuana use, the RCA's executive vice-president, Rabbi Mark Dratch, said it's safe to assume many of his contemporaries support smoking marijuana for medical reasons.

As for recreational smoking, he said, "our concern has mostly been figuring out how to provide pastoral support to people with addictions, but I imagine, as marijuana becomes more legalized and available, we'll have to make a public statement about it."

He subsequently noted that becoming intoxicated or "artificially creating an altered state of consciousness," wouldn't be endorsed by the RCA.

Neither the Rabbinical Assembly, which is the international association of Conservative rabbis, nor Reform's Central Conference of American Rabbis have taken official positions on recreational marijuana smoking, though as early as 2001, it urged its member rabbis to "become better informed about the medicinal use of marijuana and its constituent compounds" and to "urge elected officials to support legislation to reclassify marijuana as a prescribed controlled substance so that it can be used to conduct research and prescribed for critically ill patients with intractable pain and other conditions." And in 2003, the Union for Reform Judaism, the denomination's umbrella group, resolved to urge elected U.S. officials to support legislation permitting medical usage.

Still, the growing social acceptance of marijuana in Canada – in June, the Canadian Supreme Court ruled that all forms of medical marijuana are legal for those with a license, and federal Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau has called for overall legalization – makes particularly topical questions of where the Jewish community's leadership lands on the subject.

Specifically, does smoking pot recreationally violate Jewish law?

And for Jews that smoke, can it be a tool to enhance spirituality or connection with ritual and community?

Several Canadian rabbis from various denominations were contacted to comment for this article – including Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist – but most declined, saying they didn't feel sufficiently knowledgeable about the health effects of marijuana or the legal nuances surrounding it.

Rabbi Daniel Korobkin of Beit Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation, an Orthodox shul, invoked the Halachah *dina d'malchuta dina* – the law of the country is binding – as evidence that smoking recreationally is prohibited by Jewish law, so long as Canadian law deems it illicit.

Still, he acknowledged that the government's classification of harmful substances is subject to change.

As with cigarettes, he said, "society doesn't always get it right, but... we have to make decisions based on society's [current] understanding of how substances interact with our bodies."

He also noted that smoking weed might violate the command, "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves" (Deuteronomy 4:15) – meaning that one must guard one's body from physical harm.

Further, using a substance to the point that it impedes one's ability to pray is halachically prohibited.

He referenced Purim, when the obligation to get drunk is tempered by warnings about not getting so intoxicated that one can't properly pray or say grace after meals.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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Harry and Shirley Rostein signing their Book of Life story in October 2013
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A big thank you from Israel

Gil Troy

A few weeks ago, my family hosted a delegation from CIJA, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, for Friday night dinner at our home in Jerusalem. The day began (way too early), as the sun rose over the Kinneret, the Sea of Galilee, where we had gone camping with close friends to mark the end of summer vacation. The day ended on our porch, with a magical Shabbat dinner under the stars, as we enjoyed Jerusalem's cool-but-not-by-Canadian-standards night air by eating outside.

Our family friends, Israelis who have never visited North America, were fascinated by the dinner guests we were rushing home to host. They could not believe that serious, important, busy people would be devoting a week or so of their lives to come to Israel on a kind of work-mission voluntarily. They were further amazed when we told them that some of these people had come on multiple visits before and that these missions of support, solidarity, and enlightenment were fun and meaningful.

Talking to our friends, I realized that most Israelis have no idea about the vast infrastructure of pro-Israel support and engagement in Canada, the United States and elsewhere. The newspapers are filled with stories of anti-Israel boycotts and berating, of divestment and denouncements. Most Israelis understand that Jewish people across the world support them, but they don't quite understand what shape that support takes, how intensive a commitment that can be, and how many non-Jews are equally invested and engaged in not just defending Israel, but celebrating it. Given that so many are unaware, they rarely say thank you.

So, as this new Jewish year begins, in the name of my amazed, impressed and appreciative friends, and in the name of all 8.4 million Israelis who benefit from the good works of so many volunteers and donors in Canada and throughout the world, allow me to say *todah rabah*, thank you very, very much.

Thank you to organizations like CIJA that do so much to advocate for Israel,

> *Most Israelis have no idea about the vast infrastructure of pro Israel support ... in Canada and elsewhere*

educate about Israel, and nurture the strong bond between Israel and Canada that has intensified in the last few years. We salute Prime Minister Stephen Harper's unwavering support for Israel and note how anxious his campaign rivals are to insist that they are equally supportive of Israel (even as we wish that NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair's ardent support for Israel was applauded by all his NDP colleagues as a mark of great insight rather than a lapse in good judgment).

We say thank you to the Jewish Federations of North America, mind-blowing do-gooding, fundraising and life-affirming organizations in the United States and Canada that do so much to bring alive the Jewish values of community, generosity, justice and mutual responsibility. In Israel, fundraising, especially for the poor, is often more personal, more informal, more local. The vast, volunteer-fuelled federation philanthropic structure does a great job of taking care of Jewish communal needs both at home and at home – meaning within local communities and in Israel.

We say thank you to the more specific organizations supporting Israeli universities, renewing Jerusalem, helping lone soldiers, healing the wounded, advancing science, and on and on. Federation gifts are important for making a broad statement about supporting communal endeavours. More tailored gifts are important expressions of individual interest and engagement.

Finally, we say thank you to basic educational and identity-building organizations, synagogues, Jewish day schools, Jewish camps and Birthright Israel, which both embody the interweaving of the Jewish People's destiny with Israel and prepare the next generation to inherit the mantle of leadership, of investing, of giving, of living large in the truest, Jewish sense of the word, by helping others near and far, not by indulging yourself.

Todah and Shanah Tovah from Jerusalem. ■

Remembering our grandfather's sukkah

Sara Horowitz

In the middle of a poem titled *Ha-yehudim – The Jews* – the Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai gives a mini-course in the nature of Jewish memory. "A Jewish man remembers the sukkah in his grandfather's home./ And the sukkah remembers for him." Poised on the edge of nostalgia, we expect the poem to describe a childhood memory, long-ago festival celebrations and beloved grandparents. Instead, the poem plunges into the complexity of the Jewish experience. Meditating on what it is that "the sukkah remembers" for the unnamed Jewish man, the poem lists an enchainment of events, objects and sensations, each of which works as a memory-trigger for the next: desert wanderings, covenantal tablets, the Golden Calf, thirst, hunger and Egypt.

At first reading, it seems that Amichai is simply describing an example of how rituals and ritual objects function as symbols – evoking iconic moments in the shared Jewish past. The sukkah points to the temporary dwellings of the Israelite journey from the slavery of Egypt to the freedom of home, much as the objects on the Passover seder plate suggest other aspects of slavery and freedom. In participating in the ritual, we actively claim the memory and all that is attached to it.

But the "Jewish man" in Amichai's poem is sorting through a complicated – one might even say strained – relationship to the Jewish past. He recollects his grandfather's sukkah, but does not have one of his own. And rather than reminding this man of the collective Jewish past, the sukkah simply does the remembering for him. The phrase that is rendered in translation as "the sukkah remembers for him" reads, in the original Hebrew, *vehasukkah zocheret bimkomo* – the sukkah remembers in his place, or in his stead.

It is not an accident, I think, that the poem uses the sukkah to negotiate the tensions in modern Jewish identity. The sukkah is, after all, a paradox itself, standing for both wilderness and shelter, for both wandering and home. It is, in a way, a mixed symbol, contradictory and in tension with itself.

For us, rooted in permanence and the solidity of our homes, the sukkah pulls us a bit into wilderness. What does wilderness mean? Even in the densely populated cities of Canada, we can feel the freshness and also the scariness of the wilderness. In the urban forest of Toronto, for example, roam raccoons, coyotes, skunks and foxes. My suburban nephew sighted wild turkeys and a family of bears on his property. The night noises that troubled the sleep of our ancestors in flimsier dwellings than ours has the power to unsettle us, as well.

In Judaism, as in many cultures, wilderness becomes a potent metaphor for encountering something difficult and profound: facing oneself, facing deep truths, facing one's demons, facing the Divine. Prophets, seers or ordinary folks in quest of something gravitate away from the familiar, the domestic and the protected. They enter into the desert wilderness and come out changed.

Even in our cities and in the midst of community, Sukkot draws us out into the wilderness – but immediately domesticates it. Or, to put it a different way, Sukkot creates a new kind of domestic space where the wilderness cannot be kept out. It reminds us that from time to time, at certain junctures in one's life, one removes oneself from the ordinary, peeling back the social layers, to experience one's existential aloneness. But this is not the kind of existence that can be sustained – nor should it be. In Judaism, the desert wilderness is not a place to remain. Human life is to be lived among others, with family, friends, community.

In Amichai's poem, "The Jews" are defined by the bonds of family and shared history. Fragile and impermanent like human memory, the grandfather's sukkah nonetheless insists on being remembered, and on remembering. ■

Why Jews should vote for the Tories

Michael Taube

It should be no surprise to hear that I'll be voting for Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Tories in the upcoming federal election.

Let's explore three significant reasons why you should, too.

First, the Tories support small "c" conservative principles. This includes a firm belief in small government, lower personal and corporate tax rates, more individual rights and freedoms, and trade liberalization.

In fairness, they haven't been perfect. The Tories' lack of commitment, at times, to fiscal conservatism has been worrisome.

We clearly need broad-based tax relief for all Canadians and not targeted tax cuts. Meanwhile, we need less emphasis on ineffective infrastructure projects and more focus on removing foreign ownership restrictions and promoting an open skies policy, among other things.

Then again, considering Canada's disgraceful historical attachment to backward left-wing philosophies like nanny statism and wasteful spending on bloated social services, the Tory platform (warts and all) has been a step in the right direction.

Second, the Tories prudently managed the local economy for many years.

The late finance minister Jim Flaherty balanced a large deficit with a significant stimulus package during the 2008 global economic crisis. This strategy enabled Canadian banks to avoid a liquidity crisis, and protected our economy. And by keeping income tax rates in check and wisely avoiding the introduction of more state-run programs, our nation stayed comfortably afloat.

Flaherty's strategy made Canada the envy of G20 nations. We earned praise from many corners, including former U.S. treasury secretary Henry Paulson (Republican) and current Treasury Secretary Jack Lew (Democrat).

But what about the recession we're currently in?

Besides the fact the Canadian economy was in the black for much longer than most democratic countries, it's not entirely clear we're in one. Some experts have argued it's a "technical" recession at best.

Why? Canada has experienced solid job increases rather than high unemployment levels during two consecutive quarters of negative economic growth. Meanwhile, our GDP, which only went down 0.1 per cent in the second quarter, has rebounded with an increase of 0.5 per cent in June.

To put it another way, we may already be out of this short-term "recession" that we may never had been in in the first place.

As confusing as that may sound, one thing is clear: Tory economic policies prevented us from entering a long-term recession that other western nations faced in recent years. This seems to prove the Tories took the correct route to financial stability and success.

Third, the Tories endorse a robust foreign policy agenda.

Harper has turned our country into a respected leader, rather than a ragtag follower, during international wars, minor skirmishes and humanitarian efforts. This includes aiding Afghanistan, the war against ISIS, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and strong support for Israel.

The fact that Canada, a middle-power country, has achieved this type of success on the international stage is something we should all respect and admire.

Critics have naturally lamented the fact that Canada's traditional peacekeeping role has fallen by the wayside in the Harper era. Putting those crocodile tears aside, they've also spent a great deal of time and energy on the Tories-Israel connection.

In particular, the Jewish left continually perpetuates the myth that the party's position on Israel is the only plausible explanation as to why 52 per cent of this religious community voted Tory in the 2011 federal election. They refuse to acknowledge that Jews aren't single-issue voters, can think for themselves, and have gradually become more politically and economically conservative. They also can't accept the fact that Israel plays a minor, and not a major, role in Jewish Canadian voting patterns.

Let the naysayers build their progressive utopia with a flimsy deck of playing cards. Harper and the Tories remain the best choice for Jews – and all Canadians. They deserve your vote on Oct. 19. ■

Michael Taube is a Sun Media columnist, Washington Times contributor and former speechwriter for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Political differences are no longer unzera – *between us*

Bernie Farber

With the dissolution of organizations such as Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) and the weakening of other groups like B'nai Brith Canada, the once open-hearted Canadian Jewish community has retrenched. Eschewing progressive initiatives of the past, where the fight for human and civil rights was paramount, today, legitimate concern about the security of the State of Israel has become the sole focus. As a result, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, with his strong support for the Jewish state, has successfully used this fear as a wedge and helped cement a shift in Jewish voting patterns, moving them rightward.

To be clear, all three political leaders support the State of Israel. And there are many Canadian Jews who identify as progressive Zionists and remain fully engaged with the Jewish state. However, this isn't the same as supporting the present Likud party. Yet today, support for Israel is being portrayed by many as support for Israeli government policy, even if progressive Canadian Jews disagree with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's vision.

This issue has divided the community like no other, especially as we head toward a federal election. Don't get me wrong: politics and Jews have always had a love/hate relationship. For decades, Jews relished arguments of any political nature. Indeed, during the heyday of CJC, shouting matches between community leaders on the left and right were commonplace, but they were always kept *unzera*, amongst ourselves.

Harper has cleverly changed that channel. Today, Jews who are seen as not supporting Harper are publicly shamed to a point that many prefer silence than to engage in political discussion. After all, to be labelled a Jew who is anti-Israel for refusing to support the Tory government is a badge few want to wear.

Recently a Montreal *Gazette* opinion piece written by an admitted Jewish Liberal lamented the fact he was being treated as a "one-issue" voter. Many Jews, I believe, silently share his concerns.

Yet our Jewish neighbours to the south seem to struggle less with the use of Israel as a divisive community wedge. In fact, the vast majority of American Jews remain Democrats, despite attempts by the American Jewish right to paint President Barack Obama as anti-Israel. Why?

The answer is at once simple and complex. In a nutshell, many American Jews have ancestors who came to North America well before the Holocaust and were, therefore, less directly affected by it, while many Canadian Jews are only one or two generations removed from the attempted genocide of the Jewish People. Thus there remains an existential angst among many Canadian Jews when it comes to the State of Israel as the last bastion of protection for the Jewish People. As a son of a Holocaust survivor, I understand, and even somewhat relate to, this fear.

Today's political antics have changed our community. Never-before-seen visceral and venomous attacks have surfaced publicly. Jewish philanthropist Barry Sherman was lambasted by a former Jewish magazine editor for having the audacity to support Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau. When the editor's fulminations were made public, the extremist Jewish Defense League shunned appeals from the mainstream Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and picketed Sherman's home during a fundraiser for Trudeau.

In the end, all of these machinations may very well have a salutary effect on the Canadian Jewish community. While there was a definite shift to the right among Jewish voters in the last election, the seeds for that shift are no longer in play. Many in the community are simply fed up with the community being used as a political pawn, which will, I believe, influence this October's vote. Remember: at least half of our community did not vote Tory in the last election.

Whichever way it goes, one thing is for certain: it's no longer business as usual for the once-progressive Jewish community. Things have changed, and while the pendulum may be swinging back, I am not sanguine about it ever reaching the same balance we once had. ■

News

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Parents scramble as new rules force daycares to close

SHERI SHEFA
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After new provincial child-care regulations came into effect last month, many Jewish daycares, preschool and nursery programs that weren't in compliance with the new rules were forced to shut down – either temporarily or permanently – leaving countless parents scrambling to find spots for their kids.

The Child Care and Early Years Act replaced the Day Nurseries Act and applies to unlicensed child care, home child-care providers contracted by a licensed agency, licensed home child-care agencies, and licensed child-care centres.

Some of the new rules dictate that a provider can only care for a maximum of two children under the age of two; that a licensed home child-care provider can care for a maximum of six children under the age of 13; and that the maximum number of children applies regardless of the number of adults in the home.

Eitz Chaim Schools was one of the schools affected by the new legislation, forcing it to temporarily shut down its nursery and pre-nursery programs.

A letter to Eitz Chaim parents said administrators learned before the start of the school year that the new legislation would revoke a "grandfather clause" that permitted private schools to provide nursery school without a license.

The administrators were confident the school would qualify for a licence exemption, "on the grounds that the primary purpose of our programs is not simply 'to provide temporary care and supervision of children' (for which licenses are now required) but rather to… 'provide religious, cultural and linguistic instruction' (which programs are exempt from the license requirement)," the letter said.

Renat Keslassy and her son Aaron

But the Ministry of Education ruled Eitz Chaim didn't qualify for the exemption. The school's legal counsel advised that the ministry would likely allow it to operate with an extension while it sort things out with the province, but "to our shock and dismay, the ministry informed us that no such extension period would be provided, and that the ministry would not allow Eitz Chaim to open our nursery and pre-nursery programs without the license," the Eitz Chaim letter said.

Since the ruling, Eitz Chaim has applied for a license and is working to meet the requirements on issues such as zoning, fire code, health code, building code, insurance and specific operating policies, the administrators said.

A spokesperson said the ministry would not be able to comment on this issue by *The CJN*'s deadline.

Eva Klein, who planned to enrol her two-year-old daughter in Eitz Chaim's nursery program, said although the situation isn't ideal, she was able to secure care for her daughter while she waits for Eitz Chaim to reopen, which the school believes will likely be after Sukkot.

"Thankfully for me, I had back up child care that has been working out, and when the license comes in after the holidays, it'll actually work out well for me, because I won't have to worry about taking her out of school for chunks of time [because of the holiday closures] and then needing to re-transition her," Klein said.

"They have one of the best nursery programs, and we're just waiting anxiously to hear that they got the green light and we can start sending our kids there."

For Renat Keslassy, currently on maternity leave, the new rules made finding daycare for her infant son very difficult. "It's hard enough as it is to find a daycare for a one-year-old. This made it way harder," she said.

After reserving a spot for her son at a Jewish home daycare in the summer, she got a call from the provider in late August.

"She said, 'These new regulations came in and I'm sorry, I can't take him anymore because I can only take two kids under two, and those people called me before you did.'"

Keslassy said she looked into the home daycare that cared for her older son when he was an infant. "She said she would hold a spot for me… She called me a few days later and she said, 'Oh my God, I don't even know what's happening, I can't even take him. I don't know what I'm going to do now. I've been doing this for 20 years, and now all of a sudden I don't know what I'm going to do.'"

Keslassy said she eventually found a daycare centre that accepted her son and is in compliance with the new regulations.

Sarah Binder, director of Gan Sameach preschool, which operates out of the Shomrei Shabbos Chevrah Mishnayos Congregation in Toronto, said the school was not licensed, so she decided to close until it went through the application process.

Binder said she's in the process of applying, but doesn't know when she'll be able to reopen. "If [the ministry] comes in and they like what they see, they could give me a provisional licence, and we could operate while heading toward the real licence," she said.

"I know of a lot of home daycares – at least 10 – that shut down out of choice. A significant amount of kids were left with nothing."

She said Gan Sameach served 40 kids in two classes – one with two- to three-year-olds, the other with three- to four-year-olds.

Binder said she knew the changes were coming, "but the problem is we were already operating. We couldn't shut down while we were operating already. We had to wait for the new school year and take care of it then. We weren't sure if everyone would close down and have to start again. I thought maybe I could go through the process while operating, but our lawyer advised us not to do that."

She said many parents have opted to arrange for home child care with an unlicensed provider who is permitted to care for five children at once.

"Some people are just waiting at home for [Gan Sameach] to re-open. They may have nannies or they're not working." ■

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Canada's ties with Israel tops B'nai Brith survey results

PAUL LUNGEN
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Canada's relationship with Israel was the most important election issue named by respondents in an "Impact Survey" released last week by B'nai Brith Canada.

Respondents were given a choice of several issues to rate as their most important. Twenty-four per cent ranked "Canada's relationship with Israel" number 1, followed by "jobs and the economy" (21 per cent), "hate-related activity, anti-Semitism and terrorism" (19 per cent), "Iran" (14 per cent), "the anti-Israel boycott and sanctions movement" (eight per cent), "affordable housing and poverty issues" (six per cent), and support for community programming and active living" (one per cent). Seven per cent of respondents chose "other."

A second question asked participants to rank their second-most-important election issue. One-quarter said "hate activity and anti-Semitism" followed by "jobs and the economy (22 per cent) and "Iran" (15 per cent).

The survey was conducted on the B'nai Brith Impact website from Aug. 2 to 12 and was open to B'nai Brith members and the general public. Approximately 500 people took part in the survey, which was promoted via Facebook, an email list and word of mouth. The system tracked respondents' IP addresses, so the poll could not be taken more than once from the same address.

The cover of B'nai Brith's election guide

Breaking down the survey participation further, respondents were heavily skewed to males (59 per cent) and were part of an older demographic. Eighty-four per cent of participants were 51 and over, while 60 per cent hailed from Ontario, 13 per cent from Quebec, 10 per cent from British Columbia and nine per cent from Manitoba.

Michael Mostyn FILE PHOTO

"The survey is representative of B'nai Brith supporters and not the general Canadian population," explained B'nai Brith CEO Michael Mostyn.

"B'nai Brith was not looking for a statistically representative sample. One could assume that the numbers weigh toward Ontario due to the fact that the majority of Canadian Jewry resides in that province," he added. "We found it interesting that the majority of respondents were from a demographic over 50 years of age, however, it is generally the case that younger Canadians are less interested in the political process."

Participants were not asked to indicate their party preferences or which leader would make the best prime minster, Mostyn said.

"As a non-partisan organization, our questions focused on discovering the issues that matter most to the community to inform our own advocacy efforts. As the grassroots voice of the community, the only way we can effectively advocate for the community we represent is to constantly dialogue with our base," he added.

In addition to surveying community members about their election priorities, B'nai Brith is hosting election debates. One was scheduled for Sept. 21 at Beth Torah Congregation and featured the main party candidates in Eglinton-Lawrence.

Others are being held Sept. 30 in the ridings of Thornhill, at the Sephardic Kehila Centre, and Winnipeg South-Centre, at the Asper Jewish Community Campus on, and in York Centre on Oct. 1 at Adath Israel Congregation.

"There is good reason why B'nai Brith has always shown leadership in hosting local riding debates in Canada," Mostyn said.

"B'nai Brith is at the forefront on a daily basis in dealing with many of the top areas of concern to the community." ■

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OPINION

Now is the time to get engaged in the federal election

Jonathan Bloomberg
and **Mark Waldman**

The 2015 federal election is well underway, and while casting a vote on Oct. 19 is very important, there is more that can and should be done. It is vital that our community – the Jewish and pro-Israel community – engage further in the democratic process by volunteering.

Why? The answer comes down to two main reasons: demographics and geography. Demographically speaking, the Jewish population represents just over one per cent of the total Canadian population. There are also only a handful of ridings where there is a strong community presence – only three per cent of the total number of 338.

This means that in order for the Jewish and pro-Israel community to make an impact beyond its numbers, we need to be strategic and get engaged in record numbers.

This is where the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC) can help. We are a multi-partisan organization whose mandate is to encourage community members to get involved in the democratic process by volunteering with the candidate or campaign of their choice.

Volunteers are hard to come by, which means that showing up can make a significant difference – even a few hours will go a long way. When political pundits talk about a campaign having a good "ground game," they are referring to the deployment of volunteers and their ability to drive their supporters to the polling booth. You can singlehandedly impact the outcome in a close race.

As a small community, we have the biggest impact by volunteering not only for our friends in local ridings but also in ridings where our community does not have much of a presence, where there are close races, and with friends in all parties. CJPAC can help by connecting community members with campaigns across the country. There is so much ground to cover.

We have been extremely fortunate that all three major political parties in Canada have shown support for both Israel and the Jewish community. Still, we cannot become complacent. We must remain active in the political arena, and volunteering is an excellent way to build key relationships.

> *You can singlehandedly impact the outcome in a close race*

Campaigns desperately need people for all kinds of tasks, so wherever your strengths lie, you can be sure there is a role for you. Volunteers will make phone calls on behalf of candidates to track support, canvass neighbourhoods and knock on doors, hand out literature on the street or at front doors, put up candidates' signs, drive voters to polling stations on election day and perform other tasks crucial to their campaign team's success. On election day, volunteers help "get out the vote" and work as scrutineers.

Our community has a long history of political engagement and this election should be no exception. It is part of our civic duty – as Canadians and as Jews – to get involved.

During the 2011 federal election, CJPAC helped connect 900 volunteers with political campaigns across the country and in all major political parties. By becoming a volunteer and working with us to connect with the candidate or campaign of your choice, you can help not only our democracy, but also our community, ensuring that we have a large impact on Oct. 19 and beyond.

For more information on how to make your mark this election, please visit our new election website itsup2you.ca, or contact us at volunteer@cjpac.ca or 1-866-929-9552.

We look forward to seeing you all on the campaign trail in the weeks to come. ■

Jonathan Bloomberg is the chair of CJPAC. Mark Waldman is the executive director of CJPAC.

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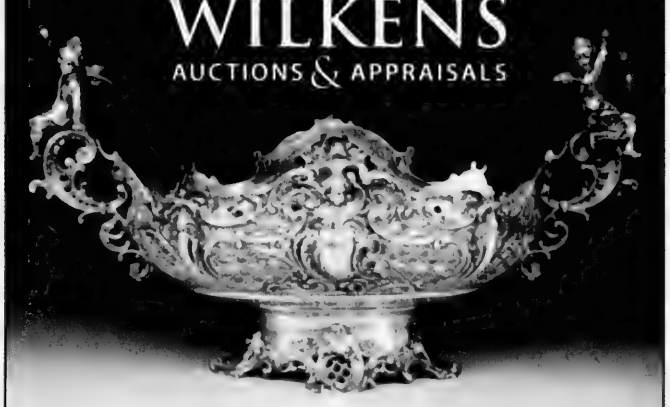

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CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK

A national icon takes his leave

Daniel Wolgelerenter

One of the questions I posed in this space a few weeks ago was: who will be the next big-name Jewish MP?

With apologies to Joe Oliver, Canada's first Jewish federal finance minister, what I may subconsciously have been asking is who will be the next Irwin Cotler, now that the 75-year-old Mount Royal Liberal MP is retiring from politics after a 16-year run.

It's not an entirely fair question, really, because it's nearly impossible to measure up to a national icon.

With his naturally menschlich demeanour and his long list of achievements before entering politics, Cotler has been a staple of public life in Canada and internationally for more than 40 years.

Whether as a distinguished professor of international law at McGill, president of Canadian Jewish Congress, a messenger who helped kick-start peace between Egypt and Israel, an advocate for Soviet Jewry in the 1970s and 1980s, or representing such high-profile political prisoners as Natan Sharansky and Nelson Mandela, Cotler has been a constant.

So active has he been in public life that many of us at this newspaper have often joked that the C in *CJN* stands for "Cotler," because he makes news, and always for honourable reasons.

In many ways, he's a Canadian version of Alan Dershowitz, who studied with Cotler at Yale in the 1960s and worked with him to help free Mandela in South Africa, among their many collaborations.

Both Cotler and Dershowitz are true small-l liberals and law professors, but while Dershowitz is a quintessentially American street brawling New Yawker, Cotler is kinder and gentler, though equally committed to his ideals, which include being a strong defender of human rights and of Israel, as well as a foe of terror-exporting countries such as Iran.

Which brings us to another theme I've been discussing since the start of the campaign: the steep decline in civility in Canadian political life. The same has happened to political discussion in the Jewish community, where divisiveness now rules the day.

Cotler, who is both strongly pro-Israel and politically left of centre, has steadfastly resisted this trend, and he demonstrates, with his signature eloquence, that Israel and Zionism aren't simply right-wing talking points.

As well, in an age of pithy sound bites meant to cut down political opponents, Cotler makes his points respectfully – and often in long paragraphs, to the chagrin of journalists who cover him.

This reluctant politician – who, in what's become political legend, only agreed to run in the Montreal riding of Mount Royal at the urging of his wife and his congregational rabbi – is a throwback to a time when politics were more collegial and less partisan.

He has worked with and maintained the respect of colleagues across party lines. Indeed, he famously had a strong working relationship with former Conservative cabinet stalwart John Baird, who considered Cotler a friend and whom Cotler has said was an excellent foreign minister.

Cotler has maintained his genteel disposition even when his opponents haven't always returned the favour.

He refused to make it a political issue when he was barred from a Tory-hosted charity event in Israel during Prime Minister's Stephen Harper's January 2014 trip.

He was a bit more vocal in 2009, when the Tories falsely suggested he had attended the 2001 UN anti-racism conference in Durban, South Africa, which descended into raw anti-Semitism. And in 2011, he (perhaps too) politely asked the Conservatives to "cease and desist" when they made misleading calls about him to constituents in his riding, saying he was planning to retire.

Sadly, in the current polarized political climate, there doesn't seem to be another Cotler on the horizon.

But perhaps with him as a model, someone else can aspire to his mantle.

Meanwhile, in the spirit of *hakarat hatov*, we should thank him for all he has done for his country and for the Jewish community.

And let's hope he's not entirely finished doing his good work just yet. ■

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All You Need to Know about the Jewish High Holidays

The Jewish festivals are more than food and family gatherings. They are both spiritually profound, and more relevant to our lives today than most people realize.

The Jewish festivals are a trajectory of the nation's destiny, a cardiogram of our joint heartbeat. The symbols of the Jewish festivals convey information that otherwise would be lost in the labyrinth of history or distorted beyond recognition. But our festivals deliver messages not only about our past, but also about our present and future.

Where It All Began

The first in line of the fall Jewish festivals is the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah (Head (Beginning) of the Year). It denotes a spiritual awakening. The festival marks the moment when a person senses an aspiration to discover the meaning of life

Adam (Eve's husband and briefly a resident of the Garden of Eden), was the first person to contemplate life's meaning. We mark the day when he began to think about it as the beginning of the year, the beginning of the Jewish calendar, known as Rosh Hashanah.

In other words, Rosh Hashanah is not just a day on the calendar; it is a milestone of spiritual development. On this day we report to ourselves how we fared spiritually during the previous year, and seek to make corrections for the future.

Understanding the Symbols

Rosh Hashanah symbolizes our aspiration to higher values, benevolence, sharing, and caring for each other. The essence of Judaism is unity and brotherly love, expressed in the sayings, "That which you hate, do not do to your friend," and "Love your neighbor as yourself." The tradition to eat a fish's head symbolizes our decision to be at the forefront, leading ourselves and others toward unity.

The pomegranate, with its numerous juicy seeds, reminds us that we, too, are as seeds, and that it is time for us to ripen spiritually through unity. The seeds also represent our egoistic desires, which we must enjoy in a more balanced way, where we realize our aspirations through contribution to society.

The Rosh Hashanah apple symbolizes the primordial "transgression" of disunity. We dip it in honey to symbolize its sweetening (correction) through our reestablished unity. To achieve this unity and rekindle our brotherly love, we have to rise above our egoism and balance it by establishing among us positive connections.

A Day of Atonement

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, follows Rosh Hashanah. On this day, we fast and pray for our correction. One of the most meaningful parts of the day is the reading of the Book of Jonah. It is with good reason that this part of the Yom Kippur service is so significant. The Hollywood-style storyline of the book contains a message that if heeded, can lift humanity from the global sludge we seem to be submerged in and brighten our future.

In the story, God commanded Jonah to help the residents of the city of Nineveh reform their ways, meaning reestablish positive relationships among them.

Abraham the patriarch tried to do the same in Babylon. When the majority of Babylonian rejected his novel ideas, he took those who were willing to unite and founded with them the Jewish nation.

Here is what acclaimed historian, Paul Bede Johnson, had to say about Abraham specifically, and the Jews in general, in his book, The History of the Jews: "What would have happened to the human race if Abraham had … kept his higher notions to himself, and no specific Jewish people had come into being? Certainly the world without the Jews would have been a radically different place. …To [the Jews] we owe the idea of equality before the law…; of the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person; of the individual conscience…; of the collective conscience, and so of social responsibility; of peace as an abstract ideal and love as the foundation of justice, and many other items that constitute the basic moral furniture of the human mind."

Today the entire world needs collective conscience and social responsibility, but these ideas seem utterly unreal. At the time, they also seemed unreal to Jonah. So instead of attempting what Abraham had attempted, he took off in a ship and tried to forgo his task. But as we know, God found him, took him for a punitive ride in a fish's belly, and he repented and carried out his assignment.

Like Jonah, we are trying to waive our mission. We believe it is too difficult, too unpopular, and generally unappealing to be the world's emissaries for the message of love of others and mutual responsibility. But like Jonah, we will not be able to avoid our destiny. We are obliged to establish a society that practices these noble values, and sets an example for others to follow. It is the essence of our being "a light for the nations."

We All Are All On One Boat

"In our interconnected world, we are all on one boat. Any thought of decoupling is a mirage," said Christine Lagarde, head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). She was right. And just as the sailors on Jonah's boat discovered that he was guilty of their peril, the world is pointing a blaming finger at us, Jews, for the stormy seas our global ship is sailing nowadays. As Jonah eventually took on his mission, we must take it on ourselves to unite so as to provide a model of a practical method for uniting. This is our obligation to humanity today, and the sooner we achieve it, the better it is for us and for the world.

Happy New Year!

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Chabad builds new B.C. centre

Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps at the ceremony FACEBOOK PHOTO

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

As Rosh Hashanah approached, Chani Kaplan was busy catering for New Year's meals for 250 on Vancouver Island, all prepared out of her small home kitchen.

She and Rabbi Meir Kaplan, who head up the Chabad Centre for Jewish Life and Learning on Vancouver Island, are praying that by next year at this time, their brand new 10,000-square-foot building at 2955 Glasgow St. in Victoria will be up and running. It would be, they say, the first new shul in Victoria in 150 years.

"We need a permanent place for Chabad on the island," Rabbi Kaplan said. "We've been serving the community for 12 years, and we need the stability of a permanent space, with a commercial kitchen, a new mikvah and classrooms for preschool, Hebrew school and adult learning."

For now, Chabad is in a temporary location in downtown Victoria, where it draws hundreds of families for events and services and has a mailing list of 1,000 families, Rabbi Kaplan said.

Chabad's preschool is already open, with 30 kids.

"This is not a question of build it and they will come," Rabbi Kaplan said. "They're here. Now we need to build it."

Fundraising efforts for the new Chabad Centre started two years ago, and so far $1.5 million has been raised, and the land for the site has been paid for. Rabbi Kaplan plans to raise the remaining $2 million on the island and hopes some support from outside Vancouver Island will be forthcoming, too.

He's also hoping the new building will receive matching government grants to cover security cameras.

If everything goes according to plan, construction will begin next month and be completed by next August, which means Rosh Hashanah services next year would be held in a newly opened building.

Late last month, some 250 people attended a groundbreaking ceremony, including Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps and other local politicians and MLAs, such as Green party Leader Elizabeth May, NDP MPs Murray Rankin and Randall Garrison and NDP MLA Gary Holman.

The new building will be centrally located, both for those who live in Victoria and those on the island's outskirts.

"It's next to one of the biggest parks in the area, with a playground for kids and a soccer field," he added. "That will be a tremendous asset for summer camps and Hebrew school, to have this amazing outdoor space adjacent to our building."

Leon Zetler, owner of Aubergine Specialty Foods in Victoria, was among the donors and is one of the founding members of the centre. "Chabad has brought many fantastic benefits to Vancouver Island, and investing in Chabad is, in my mind, investing in our Jewish values and our future. The centre will be with us for the rest of our lives, and I strongly encourage other Jewish folks on the island to donate to this wonderful cause."

JIAS tells community how to sponsor Syrian refugees

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Lia Kisel, left, JIAS Toronto's language and settlement director, and executive director Janis Roth JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

Canadians face a choice about which historical narrative they'd prefer to look back on: being part of a country that closes its doors to people in need, or being part of one that welcomes them, Naomi Alboim, chair of the Policy Forum at Queen's University School of Policy Studies, told a roomful of Jewish individuals and organizational leaders Sept. 16.

Alboim, who was head of federal refugee resettlement programs in Ontario during the Indochinese boat people crisis in 1979 and more recently was one of the founders of the organization Lifeline Syria, spoke at an information session hosted by Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) to brief the Jewish community on JIAS Toronto's role in addressing the Syrian refugee crisis.

Held at the Lipa Green Centre and attended by more than 100 people, the event was intended to give members of the community interested in sponsoring a Syrian refugee family or donating time or money to the cause a step-by-step breakdown of how to proceed.

Attendees included representatives from synagogues and groups such as Beth Tzedec Congregation and the Danforth Jewish Circle.

Janis Roth, executive director of JIAS Toronto, told the crowd the organization called the meeting in response to the inundation of calls it has received from people asking what JIAS Toronto is planning to do and how they can help.

"We as Jews understand what it means to be refugees," Alboim said, explaining that 11 million Syrians have so far been displaced – seven million of them within Syria, while four million have been scattered around neighbouring countries or further afield.

The humanitarian needs are too overwhelming for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to cope with, and Canada, along with other countries, needs to step up and contribute sponsorship and resources.

"Canada alone can't solve this problem but it can be part of a global solution. Our response to date has been woefully inadequate," she added.

Lifeline Syria, which Alboim helped form in June, is a volunteer-run group whose goal is help recruit, train and support sponsoring organizations so that those sponsors can bring 1,000 Syrian refugees to the Greater Toronto Area.

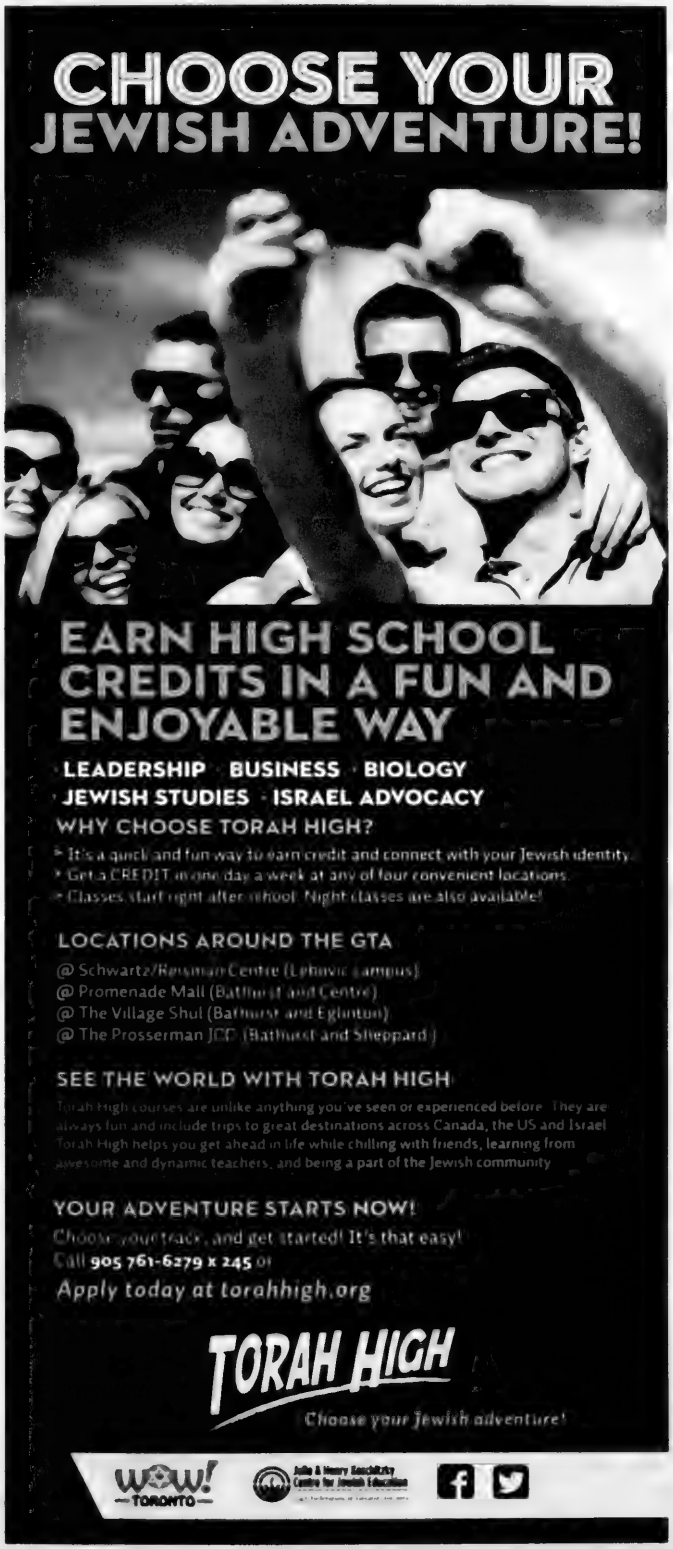
Canadians' immense interest in the group and the media attention it has received have convinced its founders that they'll be able to "exceed that goal several times," said Alboim.

Lifeline Syria sees itself as a "matchmaker" that pairs sponsoring groups with refugees, but the administrative process is complex, Alboim noted, adding that the Jewish community is lucky to have JIAS Toronto working as an umbrella group to help facilitate it.

Lia Kisel, JIAS' language and settlement director, laid out what sponsoring a Syrian family will entail:

- An individual or group of people – this could range from a family or group of friends to a synagogue – comes together to form a "constituent group" (CG).
- The CG must present references and other details to JIAS Toronto, which functions as a "sponsorship agreement holder" under Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- The CG and JIAS Toronto sign a memorandum of understanding that includes a detailed list of responsibilities that each will take on.
- The CG must secure 60 per cent of the sponsorship costs at this time (JIAS can issue tax receipts for these funds).
- JIAS Toronto then submits a detailed sponsorship application to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- During the six-month period following submission of the application and prior to the refugee or refugee family's arrival, the CG makes monthly payments to JIAS in order to cover the remaining 40 per cent of the total sponsorship costs.
- Upon the refugee's arrival, JIAS works with the refugee family and creates a budget with the sponsorship funds for a period of 12 months from the day of arrival and will co-ordinate additional settlement and integration efforts.

CGs will also be responsible for non-financial support to the individual or family they sponsor, Kisel stressed. This might include welcoming refugees when they arrive, helping them find housing, accompanying them to medical appointments and grocery shopping, helping them register their children in school, etc. ■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AEPi fraternity keeps people Jewish, study finds

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According to a study commissioned by Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi), the Jewish fraternity instils within its members a sense of communal responsibility, a connection to Israel, and a commitment to Jewish continuity.

Researched and conducted by Groeneman Research & Consulting in 2014, the report – titled *Assessing the impact of the Alpha Epsilon Pi Experience: Findings from a 2014 survey of alumni* and which has yet to be officially released – revealed that AEPi alumni are generally connected to the Jewish community at a higher rate than North American Jews in general.

Of the 1,137 AEPi alumni who were interviewed, most were under 40 and attended university from 1995 to 2010. Five per cent of those surveyed attended Canadian schools.

The survey investigated topics that included whether AEPi alumni were more likely to marry Jewish and/or raise Jewish families, the "Jewishness" of their social circle, their involvement in the Jewish community, their engagement with Israel, and religious observance.

According to the survey, "intermarriage is lower than average – and their children are being raised Jewish more than others."

Eighty per cent of AEPi alumni married Jewish compared to 57 per cent of American Jewish men, according to the PEW Research Center's 2013 survey, *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*.

Thirty per cent said AEPi influenced their views about marrying Jewish, and 88 per cent said their children are being raised as Jews.

"Three-quarters of alumni participated in Jewish organizations or activities besides AEPi while in college. Over half acknowledge the fraternity for facilitating this involvement," the report said.

"Four out of every five alumni have been to Israel. Almost half of all AEPi alumni had visited on a Birthright trip. Both rates surpass norms for young Jewish men in general."

Sixty four per cent of AEPi alumni donated to a Jewish non-profit or charity, compared to 54 per cent of American Jewish males in general.

Jay Feldman, managing director of AEPi's foundation, said he was not surprised by the findings.

"Anecdotally, the members talk about how their AEPi experiences had a direct impact on the strengthening of their identity, of their affiliation" Feldman said.

Jay Feldman

He said the results of the study revealed that many alumni have gone on to work, whether professionally or as volunteers in the Jewish world.

"Over the decades, the Jewish fraternity has evolved," Feldman said. "We're global, we're in seven countries, 188 campuses. In the last 10 years in particular, we've intensified our supplemental programming that we do. We do conferences and training seminars and workshops and programs.

"What we set out to do was take the four year fraternity experience and use it as a platform to enhance the Jewish identity."

Feldman said the most "gratifying" aspect of the study was the confirmation that most alumni feel a connection to Israel and place value on raising Jewish families.

"Also, there is a portion of the report where it talks about how for some people AEPi was a place where they developed and cemented deep friendships and made meaningful connections with their peers and other Jews, which is very important to us as well," Feldman said.

Although not interviewed for this survey, David Burden, a 32-year-old AEPi alumnus of York University who serves as the fraternity's regional governor for some of the Canadian chapters, is a prime example of an AEPi success story.

He married a Jewish woman, plans to raise any future children as Jews, observes Jewish holidays, is involved with other Jewish organizations and "for the most part, I live a Jewish lifestyle. I identify as a Jew and I'm very proud of that. I know that I can attribute that to my time in AEPi," Burden said.

"The real benefit of AEPi is keeping the community tight. When people go away to university, after coming from a place like [The Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto] where it's easy to be Jewish, as soon as you go away to university you are outside of the nest and you really have to make the decisions for yourself and [it helps to be] aligned with other Jews who are of a similar mindset," he said.

"I'm not really surprised by the results of the survey, because I am in touch with so many guys who are involved Jewishly. It's not a surprise that AEPi is keeping people Jewish. For anyone who really knows what AEPi is, it goes without saying." ■

Corrections

The story "Grandmother to climb Kilimanjaro for charity" (Sept. 17) misidentified the grandmother. Her correct name is Helen Silverstein.

• • •

The profile of Alvin Segal in *The CJN*'s Rosh Hashanah greetings supplement incorrectly referred to Segal's former wife, Leanor, as his current wife.

We apologize for these errors.

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Aish Toronto is pleased to announce the following appointment:

DEVORAH OHAYON
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Devorah Ohayon worked previously with Rabbi Ephraim Shore as a fundraiser for Aish Toronto. After a number of years gaining knowledge and hands on experience in the for-profit world, she has returned to join the Aish Toronto team as the Director of Development. Devorah will be working in the fundraising department, helping to secure the annual budget, developing new partners, and assisting in designing, funding and implementing a multi-year strategic development plan. We look forward to many successful campaigns, benefitting from Devorah's determination and commitment to Aish Toronto. Devorah is married with two wonderful children.

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CIJA, Jordan co-operate on refugee aid plan

PAUL LUNGEN
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As the situation in Syria continues to deteriorate, neighbouring countries have been flooded with refugees, 1.4 million in the case of Jordan alone. Amounting to 21 per cent of the country's population, the influx has taxed the resources of the desert kingdom. But Jordan may be getting relief courtesy of a Canadian Jewish organization.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) is collaborating with representatives of Jordan's King Abdullah on a response that may take some of the pressure off Jordan. CIJA is working on a plan that will see Canadian faith groups and ethnic communities, representatives from the corporate world and the government of Canada raise funds to support the care of refugees in Jordan.

"These funds would be directed at ameliorating the conditions facing those displaced by the war," said CIJA chair David Cape.

Cape was part of a CIJA delegation that met with King Abdullah in Amman on Sept. 2. The meeting was also attended by Royal Court Chief Fayez Tarawneh, King's Office Director Jafar Hassan, and Canadian Ambassador Bruno Saccomani. It was part of ongoing ties dating back to 2012 and "was the normal continuation of a relationship that has developed and deepened over the years," said CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel.

The exact nature of the initiatives must still be determined, and the plan would need the approval of the Canadian government, said Cape. But, it would focus on helping the vast majority of refugees, who remain in the Middle East.

"The main point underscored by the king was that while images of refugees flooding Europe understandably move people, the true crisis is in the region and accepting a relative handful of refugees will not ameliorate the catastrophic situation facing those displaced in countries like Jordan, Lebanon and the like. That, in his view, is where our efforts should be directed and where we can be of most value in alleviating the humanitarian crisis," Cape stated.

In the two-hour discussion with King Abdullah and his senior advisers, "CIJA raised the idea of a public-private partnership in Canada that could enlist various faith and ethnic communities as well as the corporate world to raise urgently needed funds that would be matched by the Canadian government. These funds would be directed at ameliorating the conditions facing those displaced by the war," Cape said.

CIJA left the meeting pledging to "work directly with the palace in devising a plan that would then seek the approval of the Canadian government. It would then be promoted to Canadian stakeholders," Cape said.

"The notional idea is to mark the first tranche of support with a major event in Canada, at which the king would be the guest of honour. Over the longer term, the hope is that this could serve as a 'generic' model for application in other countries," he added.

Fogel has been in contact with Jordanian interlocutors since the delegation's return earlier this month. It is likely a series of face-to-face meetings will be held, some in Canada, after the federal election.

Cape said that while the proposed initiative "is directly exclusively at mitigating the humanitarian crisis in situ, most especially in Jordan," it does not preclude cases of family reunification and resettlement in Canada for Syrians continuing.

Costs for implementing the plan will come from the corporate sector, private philanthropists and foundations, as well as a public donation drive. Cape said he expects these funds would be matched by contributions from the federal government.

David Cape

As for financial support from the Jewish community, Cape said, "Many within the Jewish community have expressed a keen desire to help. For some, it will come in the form of sponsoring a refugee, for others it will be in donating to initiatives like that described above. CIJA is providing the range of information about sponsorship to communities across the country and such decisions will ultimately be taken by individuals and communities at the local level."

"While CIJA does not see this situation – tragic as it is – as analogous to the Holocaust or even pre-Holocaust experience, there is clearly a human tragedy playing out, and as Jews, we have an obligation to engage in the effort to address it effectively." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

Canadian owner spurs culture shift at iconic Israeli team

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Maccabi Tel Aviv, in yellow, in action against Switzerland's FC Basel during the UEFA Champions League playoff round last month. YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

Mitchell Goldhar

When David slew Goliath, his task was arguably easier than the one facing Maccabi Tel Aviv. David had only to contend with a giant of a man, a cold-blooded killer, better equipped than himself and experienced at chewing up and spitting out small fry like himself.

Maccabi Tel Aviv soccer club has a much bigger task at hand. They qualified for the UEFA Champions League but have been placed in a group alongside Chelsea FC, last year's winners of England's premier league, the biggest – and arguably the most important – domestic soccer league in the world. With guys like Oscar, Falcao and Eden Hazard in the lineup, they make Goliath look like a 98-pound weakling. Bookmakers had Chelsea at 2/9 odds to defeat Maccabi, versus Maccabi's 12/1 odds of prevailing against the London side in the group's opening game. The group also includes two other top sides, Portugal's Porto and Ukraine's Dynamo Kyiv.

Still, Mitchell Goldhar is hopeful, if not particularly optimistic. As owner of Maccabi Tel Aviv, he says it's great to be playing in the group stage in the first place, where only the best of the best compete.

"We're going to have to pinch ourselves that we're on the same pitch as Chelsea," he said, prior to the first game kickoff. "We're going to have to be over-achievers. That's not unusual for Israel."

The game at Chelsea's Stamford Bridge on Sept. 16 didn't turn out so well for the Israelis. They lost 4-0, but as Goldhar sees it, the journey is as important as the destination. As long as Maccabi Tel Aviv plays hard, stays disciplined and gives it their best shot, they'll be living up to the standards he is trying to set for Maccabi.

Those are the qualities, the ethos and the culture that he has worked to instill in the team since he acquired it five years ago from fellow Torontonian, businessman Alex Shnaider, and his group of Israeli investors. Goldhar's fortune was made in real estate development. *Forbes* ranked him 847th among the world's billionaires.

When he acquired the team, it was already a storied franchise – Israel's premier league's dominant team. Established in 1906, it had a certain cachet, both domestically and internationally. Think of the Montreal Canadiens or the Toronto Maple Leafs in their respective heydays. For Israelis, soccer is by far the number one sport and Maccabi Tel Aviv the number one team, he explained.

But the team was losing money. And the team's culture left something to be desired. Looking at the franchise from top to bottom, Goldhar believed it needed an overhaul. He cleaned house, changing the management and bringing in Jordi Cruyff, son of famed Dutch international Johan, and a top player with Barcelona and Manchester United.

"My plan was a long-term plan," Goldhar said. "I expected to lose money for many years until I got the culture of Maccabi Tel Aviv established. I thought the way we do things was important, and the results would follow.

"I wanted to establish a culture that had a respect for the team, that no one player is bigger than the team, [that included] a proper work ethic, a high standard of training and commitment to the lifestyle of the professional soccer player.

"It was a culture that needed more discipline...and not cutting corners with regard to training, nutrition and fitness," he said.

"It's a long-term process," he continued. "Not everybody involved in soccer in Israel has the patience for tolerating such a process. For a number of years in the early stages of [my] ownership, there were lots of people who would've liked Maccabi to have better results.

"I was prepared to live with all the criticism, knowing that once it's finished, it will be built for heavy weather and be good for the long term."

He paid off all the team's debts, upgraded facilities and brought in new staff in the medical, physiotherapy, sports psychology and nutrition fields.

His approach paid off. Maccabi went on to win three consecutive Israeli Premier League titles.

With its on-field success, came financial rewards. The team earned nearly 18 million euros (around $27 million) by making it to the Champions League group stage – a significant sum for a relatively small team. And that doesn't include the money that will be earned through the sale of team merchandise or through social media and exporting the brand, Goldhar said.

For Goldhar, there are other benefits to owning the team. A long-standing supporter of Israel, he was happy to find a means of expressing his Zionism in a way that touched Israelis where they lived – through their support for the country's premier soccer team.

And then there's the even broader implications of Maccabi's success. Not only would it give Israelis, especially young people, something to be proud about, but its impact could be felt far beyond Israel's borders.

"I thought it would be good for European soccer fans to take note of this Israeli team, comprised primarily of Jews. Millions of European soccer fans would see an impressive team from Israel, which says something positive about Israel at a time when we don't always get a positive press," he said. ■

SEE ALSO STORY ON PAGE 34

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Women's shelter library gives kids a homework space

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Act To End Violence Against Women (ATEVAW), a non-profit Jewish organization that helps women and their children escape domestic abuse, recently opened a library at a Toronto women's shelter to provide the youngest victims of domestic abuse with a warm and welcoming place to read, relax and play.

The ATEVAW "Turning the Page" library project first launched in 2012 to create a space in women's shelters where children have access to resources including books, cozy furniture, computers and a comfortable work space.

Last month, Nellie's Women's Shelter in downtown Toronto became the fourth shelter in Canada to have a library installed by ATEVAW, which is the only Canadian charity installing children's libraries in shelters for abused women and their children.

Since 2012, Auberge Transition in Montreal, Women's Habitat in Etobicoke, and the Yellow Brick House in Markham have each received a Turning the Page library.

Helen Lampert, an ATEVAW board member, along with project co-chairs Elayne Shuster and Toby Zarnett, and a number of other volunteers, worked for months to design the library.

She said the retail value of all the goods and services required to put this library together would run about $15,000.

"We were able to do it for much less than that, because we got incredible donations," Lampert said.

"It takes a real village to create the library. We began with a site visit and we had a volunteer that came in. He's an engineer and he drew up the measurements. We had a design team that went to work in creating all the colour choices and mock-ups of the room. We had a donation committee that went about gathering books and furniture and lighting and computers and computer desks."

Lampert explained that shelters generally don't have the funds to allocate to something they would consider a luxury, such as a library.

"In terms of our mission, it is part of the Jewish values of repairing the world and giving back to others... and we know that literacy is a huge issue for young children who are in those kinds of situations," Lampert said.

Some books in the new library

"It's a marvellous place for the kids to be able to do their homework. They've got a computer and a printer, and they didn't have any of this before. They've got lovely, cozy furniture to sit on, and a place to read together and a little table to do puzzles and play games."

She said it was also a priority to ensure that all the books and furniture were brand new.

"For the dignity and self-worth of these kids, we want them to know that they matter and they deserve brand new books and brand new everything," Lampert said.

"One of the things I think is very special about this is that we have multiple copies of each book, so in addition to whatever is on the shelf at the library, the shelter is left with about three more copies of each book, and the idea is that when a child leaves the shelter, they can take their favourite book with them and have something to take away."

ATEVAW, which has two offices, in Vaughan and Montreal, works to support the 100,000 women and children who are forced to leave their homes each year for the safety of an emergency shelter for abused women.

ATEVAW also operates kosher women's shelters in Toronto and Montreal and offers a legal information service for Jewish women who have experienced abuse.

"Violence against women is something that is still seen in the Jewish community as a shame, and there is a conception that it doesn't exist [in the Jewish community]... I recognize really how important it is that the word of what we do gets out there and women who are in that kind of situation... can have a place to turn to." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

CIJA welcomes Quebec animal welfare bill

JANICE ARNOLD
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Nothing in Quebec's draft bill on animal protection would affect Jewish ritual slaughter, says the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), which issued a statement on Sept. 15 welcoming the proposed legislation.

Rabbi Reuben Poupko, co-chair of CIJA's Canadian Rabbinic Caucus, said CIJA is not concerned at this time by media reports quoting Agriculture Minister Pierre Paradis, who introduced the bill in June, concerning the effect of the legislation on kosher or halal slaughtering techniques.

"There is nothing in the bill that explicitly or implicitly refers to kosher ritual slaughter," Rabbi Poupko told *The CJN*.

Canadian Press reported Paradis as saying he expects to hear concerns about kosher and halal slaughtering techniques during the three weeks of public hearings by a National Assembly committee on the bill, which began on Sept. 14.

To his knowledge, Paradis said, kosher slaughter would not break the planned law, but some Muslim practices in killing animals may.

Quebec Agriculture Minister Pierre Paradis

> *Judaism strictly prohibits gratuitous cruelty to animals*
>
> **Rabbi Reuben Poupko**

"Slow death is not acceptable under the new legislation," he said. "That will have an impact on those who don't find the equilibrium between religious beliefs and respect for animals."

Rabbi Poupko termed those remarks "speculation," prompted by media questions.

In his formal statement on the bill, An Act to Improve the Legal Situation of Animals, Rabbi Poupko said: "We commend the government's efforts to advance animal welfare in Quebec. Animal welfare is strongly valued by the Jewish community; Judaism strictly prohibits gratuitous cruelty to animals.

"This is why Jewish ritual slaughter, or shchitah, is as quick and painless as humanly possible."

He also notes that the Animal Legal Defense Fund, in its presentation at the hearing's opening day, said that properly performed ritual slaughter is humane and does not cause undue cruelty to animals.

CIJA will submit a brief to the National Assembly committee that will explain how shchitah "conforms entirely to the objectives of Bill 54," Rabbi Poupko said.

Paradis, who hopes to get the bill passed this fall, said Quebec is "about 20 years behind the rest of the civilized world in animal protection."

Significantly, the bill recognizes animals as "sentient beings" with biological needs, rather than "movable property."

The bill would impose fines and possibly jail time on those who abuse animals. First-time violators could be fined up to $250,000, which could increase to $750,000 and 18 months in prison for repeat offences.

D'Arcy McGee Liberal David Birnbaum, the sole Jewish MNA, said: "By tabling this bill, our government is showing that it is willing to act strongly against negligence of and cruelty toward animals. I know that residents of our riding believe that humane treatment of animals is important; in fact, the city of Cote St. Luc has been a pioneer in championing such measures."

In the unlikely event that kosher slaughter was put in jeopardy, Rabbi Poupko said CIJA would "uncompromisingly" defend the practice. ■

SeeJN | Queen's Park Rosh Hashanah

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC) hosted a Rosh Hashanah celebration at Queen's Park Sept. 16. Pictured, from left, are Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, Beth Sholom Synagogue's Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich, FSWC governor Gloria Salomon, FSWC president and CEO Avi Benlolo, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, FSWC director Jeremy Freedman, FSWC governor Dorothy Shoichet, FSWC director Michael Bregman, and Progressive Conservative house leader Jim Wilson.

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Radio-Canada ombud upholds anti-Semitism complaint

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Radio-Canada's ombudsman says the way a caller's disparaging comments about Jews made on a TV show were handled did not comply with the public network's standards.

In a Sept. 15 report, Pierre Tourangeau responded to a complaint by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) concerning the Aug. 4 episode of *La période des questions*, a public affairs program on the news network ICI RDI.

CIJA initially complained about the remarks, which it considers anti-Semitic, to Radio-Canada management, and when it wasn't satisfied by the response, to the ombudsman.

Tourangeau agreed the caller's remarks were "clearly excessive and anti-Semitic." The program's host, Christine Fournier, was reproached for not objecting to the caller's comments at the time. He concluded that the responsibility to "reject certain comments [by viewers] or to underline their excessive character [is] entirely and uniquely that of those responsible for the program and the host," especially the latter.

CIJA was troubled that Fournier failed not only to interrupt the caller, or at least point out the "inflammatory" nature of her words, but commented afterward that her remarks were "interesting."

The subject of the episode was the federal election. The caller, Marie Fontaine of Quebec City, said she wanted to know if New Democratic Party leader Tom Mulcair is "pro-Zionist" and what his foreign policy is.

"If he is pro-Zionist, well, he can pack his bags and leave. We don't want people like that here," she said.

She continued more vehemently: "Our best friend, it's not [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu, madame, not at all. We should have disinfected the place when he left. When we know about all the murders happening over there... in Israel. They are stealing, just now, land from West Bank residents. What's the problem? The United States, now Canada, we are in the claws and tentacles of those people, who want to become masters of the world."

Fournier, a veteran broadcaster, thanked Lafontaine "very much" and then commented to the show's in-studio guest, Alain-G. Gagnon, a political science professor at the Université du Québec à Montreal, that the caller's remarks were "interesting."

In a letter to Radio-Canada dated Aug. 6, David Ouellette, CIJA's deputy director of Quebec public affairs, described Lafontaine's comments as "clearly excessive and anti-Semitic" and liable to incite hatred against Jews.

In particular, her opinion that Jews seek world domination is reminiscent of "Jewish conspiracies in classic anti-Semitic literature," he wrote, including *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and other propaganda that depicts Jews as "octopuses or other monstrous figures taking over the world with their tentacles and claws."

Ouellette also complained about Gagnon's references to the "Jewish lobby" and the "many financiers" attracted to the Canadian government's pro-Israel policies. He said Lafontaine is "right to be worried."

Tourangeau concluded: "Certain comments from the public heard on the program *La période des questions*, broadcast on ICI RDI on Aug. 4, 2015 infringed on the value of equality and the guidelines on the 'respect and absence of prejudice' of the *Normes et pratiques journalistiques* of Radio-Canada."

In his earlier response to the CIJA complaint, Luc Simard, Radio-Canada's director of diversity and relations with citizens, said *La période des questions*, which is live, is a forum for public opinion and, therefore, it would be "out of place [for the program's staff] to censure what the public says under the pretext that certain opinions displease them. Our country identifies the freedom of speech as a fundamental freedom and citizens are allowed to exercise it."

Pierre Tourangeau

> *It is true that Radio-Canada must give voice to the largest possible range of opinions, but anti-Semitism is not a legitimate opinion, it's a racist belief, it is a scourge that has dogged humanity for centuries and has led to the horrors that we know*

However, Simard agreed that Lafontaine's comments about Jews seeking world domination are reminiscent of classic anti-Semitism. "Our team did not have the intention of relaying these prejudices." He wrote that Lafontaine did not express anti-Semitic views when initially screened by a researcher, or she would not have been permitted to go on air.

Simard said Fournier acted correctly in ending Lafontaine's comments "after a few seconds." Simard defended Gagnon's remarks about "financiers" being attracted to Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Israel policy. He said the "Jewish lobby" is a term for groups whose "activities are documented and the effect of their actions is known."

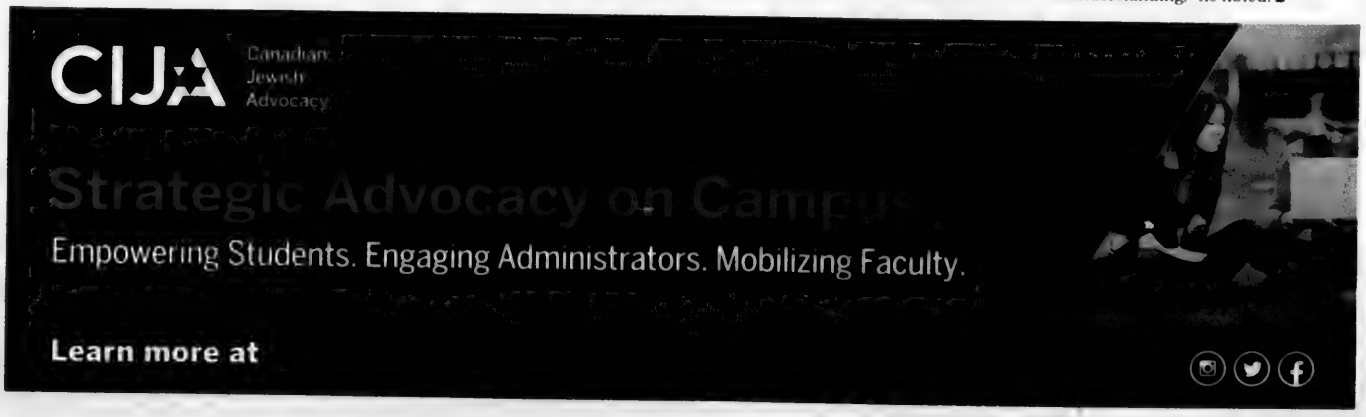
He said it was "a shame that [Lafontaine's] anti-Semitic remarks were not counterbalanced by other participants. After her intervention, 20 minutes remained in the show. The tribune was open to everyone: if someone wanted to express a contrary opinion, there is every indication that they would have had access to the line... We deplore that a voice rejecting anti-Semitism was not heard that day."

Ouellette rejected that explanation and took the complaint to the ombudsman.

Tourangeau differed with Simard that it was up to another member of the public to flag a previous caller's remarks. "It is true that Radio-Canada must give voice to the largest possible range of opinions, but anti-Semitism is not a legitimate opinion, it's a racist belief, it is a scourge that has dogged humanity for centuries and has led to... the horrors that we know."

Tourangeau said he discussed the matter with Fournier and other crew members, notably the show's director, Nathalie Demers. His impression is that no one was listening attentively when Lafontaine veered into anti-Semitism. Fournier claims she didn't fully grasp what the caller was saying.

Radio-Canada's standards prohibit stereotypes or generalizations "that feed prejudices or expose people to hate or misunderstanding," he noted. ■



Some say smoking pot helps create a sense of spirituality

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

He also expressed concern that marijuana could be a "gateway drug," potentially leading to a serious addiction.

But Rabbi Korobkin also noted that a number of talmudic passages refer to the benefits of using drugs in moderation.

"There's a recognition even from the biblical period that people suffer various pressures and depressions, and in order to be able to shake off some things that prevent you from fully expressing joy, it's sometimes not only permitted, but mandated, to indulge in small quantities of mind-altering drugs," he said.

Of course, he acknowledged, the Bible's references to drugs usually pertain to wine, and it's unclear whether marijuana would be similarly considered.

As for smoking to achieve spiritual connection, Rabbi Korobkin said, "I think it's conceivable that using certain substances could get you in touch with God. A lot of times people have trouble seeing beyond a rigid, three-dimensional universe, and certain substances let people see beyond the veil of the physical world."

Sam (also not his real name), 26, lives in Windsor, Ont., and describes himself as a "Sarah Silverman-type, cultural Jew."

He has a medical marijuana license because of an ongoing health condition, but said the line between smoking pot for medicinal versus recreational purposes is blurred for him.

"It's not that [smoking] creates a euphoric moment, but it contributes to an overall sense of well-being," he explained.

Further, because getting high can open up one's mind to different points of view, Sam said, it can create a sense of spirituality.

In the United States, "Jeffthe420chef" (he prefers not to use his real name) has caused something of a buzz, you might say, for catering private or special event meals infused with CBD strains of cannabis (typically used to treat medical conditions) for people with medical marijuana licenses. If an event is being held in a state where recreational smoking is legal and people are looking for a more recreational experience, he'll cook with THC-infused foods.

> *It's conceivable that using certain substances could get you in touch with God.*

The host provides the pot, out of which he'll make oil, and covers his travel and accommodation expenses, but he doesn't charge for cooking.

"I feel strongly about it. I believe we're only in the world a short time and must do what we can to help people," said Jeffthe420chef, explaining that he's careful when cooking with the oil to ensure nobody gets "super high."

Raised in an Orthodox home in Los Angeles, Jeffthe420chef tailors his meals to the law of the state he's cooking in and the needs of the guests.

His repertoire includes "pot Shabbats" replete with Shabbat rituals, traditional foods – his famous variations include "potzeh balls" and "cannabis challah" – and the dinners attract Jewish guests of all backgrounds, including Orthodox Jews.

"People can have a spiritual experience and bond in a way you wouldn't over just a bottle of wine," he said.

The point is not to get really stoned, but ease pain if one is suffering or simply having a heightened experience.

"When you're living day-to-day life, your ego gets in the way... but ingesting the right strain [of marijuana] takes away these barriers and you start seeing things from a whole new perspective," he said.

Erez and I sit in the park under the shade of a tree and he tells me that getting high doesn't deepen his experience of Jewish rituals, such as prayer, but neither does marijuana belong to a realm that's entirely removed from spirituality, or from God.

"Smoking sometimes stirs up emotions in me," he mused, "feelings of being grateful for where I am, and to God for putting me there." ■

SeeJN | Shabbat for Israel

At a recent "Shabbat Yisrael" in time for the High Holidays, Adath Israel Congregation welcomed its first shinshinim, Lee Katzir, front row second from left, and Sarah Shetrit, front row second from right, along with Israeli Consul General in Toronto DJ Schneeweiss, front centre, Israeli Cantor Lipa Glantz, front left, and the eight-person Kol Rina Choir from Israel, at rear. The shinshinim presented their first "dvar Yisrael" at the special musical service, led by Glantz and Adath Israel's Cantor Alex Stein, front right, where the congregation was treated to an emotional rendition of the prayer for IDF soldiers.

JEREMY MELNICK, MELNICK STUDIOS PHOTO

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INTERNATIONAL

Is Israel on the brink of another war with Hamas?

AVI ISSACHAROFF
JERUSLAEM

The rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip on Sept. 18 do not seem to be part of the trickle of projectiles "landing in open areas" to which Israelis have become accustomed at a rate of once every month or two.

While it is true that – like in previous attacks this year – Gazan supporters of the Islamic State (ISIS) rushed to claim responsibility, the manner in which videos documenting the attacks were published and especially the chosen targets testify that something has changed. The launch was meant to kill.

Firing rockets at two Israeli cities, and at least one was not a crude short-range projectile, is no mean feat. While it may have been done without Hamas' awareness, the launchers knew full well that such an act would likely get them in trouble with the authorities in Gaza.

We can thus come to a different conclusion: the volleys were launched either with Hamas' tacit approval or with the terror group looking the other way, a combination of letting out steam and sending a message to Israel and Egypt that the situation in Gaza is turning quickly intolerable.

There is no solid intelligence at the moment indicating the above. But this is an assessment heard inside the Gaza Strip.

Last week saw power outages in Gaza lasting more than 20 hours a day – due to a combination of faulty lines decreasing the supply of electricity from Egypt and the closure of border crossings with Israel due to Rosh Hashanah and Shabbat, resulting in fewer fuel deliveries. As a result, unprecedented demonstrations took place against Hamas.

Last week, hundreds of Gazans flooded the streets of the central and southern parts of the Strip for four consecutive days to protest the situation. Activists from Hamas' military wing tried to use the frustration and burned posters of Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas during the protests.

Adding to the tension, last Friday Egypt flooded tunnels near Rafah, damaging vast parts of an infrastructure Hamas has built and maintained at great cost.

The poverty, distress, unemployment, power outages, poor infrastructure (despite Israel's past and present efforts to improve them) – are all coming together to make life in the Strip unbearable for the residents there.

Palestinians take part in a protest against a power crisis in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, on Sept. 14. For weeks, residents of Gaza, home to 1.8 million people, have been experiencing long hours of electricity outages due to fuel and power shortages. ABED RAHIM KHATIB/ FLASH90 PHOTO

> *On the face of it, neither Israel nor Hamas wants an escalation*

More and more voices in the top echelon of Hamas' military wing, and especially the Gaza streets, now say that the only way to make things better is another round of violence with Israel – in other words – another war. These voices are for the moment a minority, but they multiply with each passing day, within the organization and in popular opinion.

On the face of it, neither Israel nor Hamas wants an escalation. Both sides want a lasting ceasefire. The terror group continues to convey the message that it wishes to resolve the salary crisis of its officers and in return will agree to allow PA personnel to man the checkpoints. (This attitude is not new; however, the problem with the Hamas "willingness" is its insistence that Hamas security personnel stand at checkpoints alongside those from the PA.)

Israel is doing its fair share in order to calm tensions in the Gaza Strip. But we witnessed a very similar scenario only 14 months ago, on the eve of Operation Protective Edge. Then, too, neither side had a clear interest to start a war, but Hamas' political and financial distress in Gaza pushed the organization to escalate things.

This week, IDF soldiers and Hamas troops exchanged fire on the Gaza Strip border. A Hamas fighter was wounded. If the incident had ended differently, with multiple injuries on either side, it is hard to say where we would be today.

The news from East Jerusalem last week was also far from optimistic. With more rock throwing, Molotov cocktails and other scenes of violence in and around Jerusalem, tensions in the capital were the worst they have been since the murder of 16-year-old Palestinian Mohammad Abu Khdeir last July.

Israeli government spokespeople bluntly ignore Israel's part in creating the current reality in East Jerusalem and an event that, at least in part, led to the latest wave of unrest – namely Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel's decision ahead of Rosh Hashanah, to visit the Temple Mount while leading a group of right-wing activists.

The pictures of altercations on the Temple Mount were shown on every possible Arab news channel, where one can assume they inflamed public opinion in Gaza and the West Bank, and beyond.

On Sept. 18, protests took place in several locations in the West Bank. For now, these were small protests, far more minor than those seen in the days of the first intifadah or even the second one. One of the main reasons these protests do not become massive displays of frustration that can quickly devolve to chaos is the PA. The Palestinian security establishment violently dispersed two such events in Bethlehem and Jenin, both held under the banner of "identifying with al-Aqsa."

The PA used brute force against its own people, including firing live bullets at protesting gunmen. This determination should have elicited a positive response on Israel's side. But the Israeli reaction was to block the entry of Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, head of general intelligence Majd Faraj and head of preventive security Ziad Habrih to Jerusalem.

A simple act of Israel exerting its sovereignty, but where does this put Abbas? In the highly inconvenient position of a leader whose people are being arrested at an Israeli checkpoint when they try to reach the Temple Mount.

Attention now turns to Abbas, who has pledged to drop a political bombshell during his speech at the UN at the end of the month.

Abbas suffered a severe political blow last week after he failed to convene the Palestinian National Council and move forward with an election for the Palestinian Liberation Organization's (PLO) executive committee – elections he badly wanted.

Abbas' distress – regarding Israel and his domestic situation – only grows. Israel's problem is that because Abbas is facing internal problems, he may be looking for succour from outside: a bombshell with a large enough "payload" at the UN to significantly boost his standing among the Palestinians.

If, that is, the spiraling tensions haven't rendered his planned "bombshell" irrelevant by the time the UN convenes. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

OPINION

Coping with international anarchy

Gerald Steinberg

For many years, Europeans and North Americans have largely been insulated from international turmoil. Although targeted by a few horrendous terror attacks and buffeted by oil shocks, the numerous wars and outbreaks of violence in parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East generally did not reach the West.

As a result, many came to believe that they were the leading edge of a historic and universal revolution, in which the remaining pockets of war would be isolated and then eliminated. In universities, students were taught that violence between nations, including terrorism, could be cured, like a disease, by overcoming economic, social and psychological "root causes." Belief in international law and negotiations, regardless of the situation, replaced the practice of meeting force with force, while defence and deterrence were said to be passé and unacceptable. Well-intentioned westerners projected their own limited experience on the rest of the world, assuming that tolerance and empathy were universal.

In this spirit, western journalists who wrote about conflicts (particularly involving Israel) focused on human interest stories and victims, reinforcing the dominant mythology. The reality of warring nations and religions, motivated by incitement, hate and revenge, was ignored or self-censored. For example, after adopting the image of Palestinians as victims, thousands of terrorists and rocket attacks were reported only in passing.

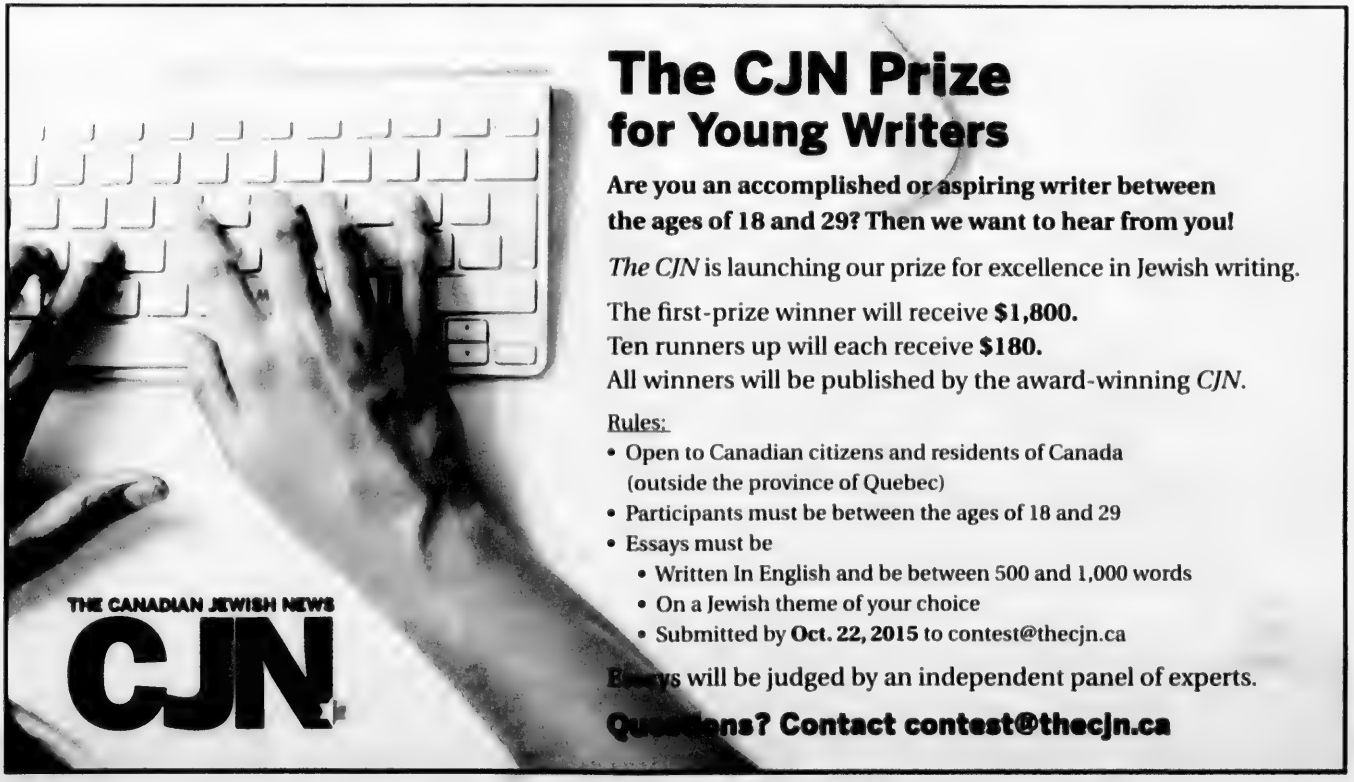
As a result, when faced with the brutal war in Syria that triggered the massive outflow of refugees, western leaders have only been able to shake their collective heads and call for calm. Numerous peace conferences and lofty United Nations resolutions ended, predictably, without impact.

In Europe, where most of the refugees land after crossing the Mediterranean, the debate focuses on helping the victims. But the generous immigration policies, including the agreement of the United States and Canada to accept a few thousand refugees, are little more than Band-Aids. As long as the war between the Assad regime (aided by Hezbollah, Iran and Russia) and the Sunnis led by ISIS (with help from Qatar and Saudi Arabia) continues, there will be many more casualties and refugees.

However, the wishful thinking that erased war and deterrence from policy options available for western democracies remains a major problem. In other parts of the world, and the Middle East in particular, the inherent anarchy of international politics – what the 16th-century political philosopher Thomas Hobbes called "the state of nature" and the "war of all against all" – continues unabated. The calm that characterizes Europe and North America are exceptions, reflecting the devastation of two world wars and the horrors of the Holocaust.

In contrast, in the Middle East, Asia and other regions of the world, the best that can be achieved is a stability based on strong armies and mutual deterrence. The deadly anarchy in Syria, Iraq, Libya and other areas neighbouring Israel demonstrates that weak and isolated peoples and nations become inviting targets for destruction, as in the case of the Yazidis, Christians, and other minorities. Sunnis living near Shiite power centres, and Shiites caught in the path of ISIS, are equally vulnerable, and have joined the flood of refugees seeking to survive.

This has always been the reality that Israel has faced, and is the main obstacle to a serious and stable peace, as imagined by western diplomats, academics and other well-intentioned analysts. For most Israelis, who can watch the attacks and counterattacks between the various armed groups and terrorists along the Syrian and Lebanese borders, the importance of a strong defence is obvious. And while the military regime in Egypt is criticized for violating human rights, the priority of effective responses to terrorist groups that control large parts of the Sinai is also understandable. As the impact of these wars spread to the West, and the comfort zones based on myths of universal peace begin to crumble, perhaps the reality that Israel faces will be better understood. ■



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Israel cracks down on Palestinian stone-throwers

LINDA GRADSTEIN
JERUSALEM

The death of an Israeli man who lost control of his car after it was hit by a rock thrown in Jerusalem by rioting Palestinians earlier this month, has sparked new efforts to crack down on stone-throwers.

"Stones and firebombs are deadly weapons; they kill and have killed," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his cabinet last Sunday. "Therefore, in recent days we have changed the open-fire orders for police in Jerusalem. Already over the weekend they used the new measures under the new orders and immediately hit those throwing stones and firebombs. Today we will facilitate an additional expansion of the ability of the police to foil the throwing of stones and firebombs and we will continue to add forces in order to strike at rioters under a simple principle that we will begin to implement around and within its borders: Whoever tries to attack us, we will hurt him."

Netanyahu said he is also advancing legislation to impose fines on the parents of minors who throw stones and firebombs. He also wants the courts to impose minimum sentences for stone-throwing.

"We cannot accept the principle that in Jerusalem our capital, or in any part of the State of Israel, in the Galilee or in the Negev, that people will organize terrorism and begin to stone passing cars or throw stones and murder people," he said. "This norm will not be established here; rather an opposite norm will – we will act against you and stop you, and we will punish you with the full force of the law."

Tensions have been growing in Jerusalem over the past few weeks, and reached a peak over Rosh Hashanah, when police stormed the Temple Mount in Jerusalem's Old City after they said they had intelligence that young men were planning to barricade themselves inside. The police action sparked clashes between young Palestinians and police throughout Jerusalem.

"There are extra police units – both border police and undercover units – throughout the area to both prevent and respond to any stone throwing incidents," Jerusalem police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld told the *Media Line*. "Over Rosh Hashanah more than 150,000 people visited the Old City and we're expecting the same numbers in the next few weeks. We have manoeuvered a number of different units to make sure there's enough security in Jerusalem."

A Palestinian demonstrator uses a slingshot to throw stones at Israeli police. FLASH90 PHOTO

But some analysts say that Israel must take a broader approach to the tensions between Jews and Palestinians in Jerusalem. The population of Jerusalem is just over 800,000 and 36 per cent of them are Palestinians. According to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, three-quarters of all Palestinians live below the poverty line.

"Increasing penalties for stone-throwing and more policing will only be partially effective," Kobi Michaeli, an expert on Palestinians at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) told the *Media Line*. "The whole approach should be integrative. This is a multi-dimensional challenge with a political, civilian and religious dimension."

He said that most of the incitement to violence is coming from Hamas, which controls Gaza, and the northern wing of the Islamic movement in Israel, both supported by Qatar. Israel should increase co-operation with Jordan which is in charge of the Waqf, the Muslim religious authority which supervises the Temple Mount.

Beyond that, he said, Israel must do more to improve the quality of life for Palestinians in East Jerusalem including improving the infrastructure in Palestinian neighbourhoods, building more classrooms, and improving the level of education in public schools there.

"We have to remember that there are 330,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem and 99.9 per cent of them are not taking part in this violence," Michaeli said. "In fact they suffer from this violence. They don't want to be harassed by the Israeli police or to see roadblocks and barriers in their neighbourhoods. They want to improve their quality of life." ■

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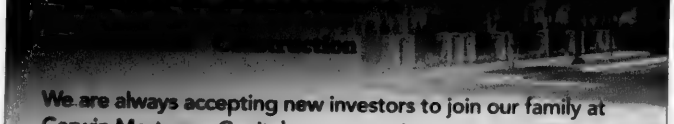

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Britain's Labour leader and Jews need to mend fences

CNAAN LIPSHIZ AND JTA STAFF
JTA, LONDON

Jeremy Corbyn, the new head of Britain's opposition Labour Party, has many of the makings of a hero for British Jews.

A lawmaker with over 30 years experience, Corbyn passionately and eloquently defends blue-collar Britain, multiculturalism and a left-of-centre notion of social justice. These are issues that resonate with Britain's 250,000-strong Jewish community, which has historically leaned Labour.

Yet Corbyn's election earlier this month has generated unprecedented concern in British Jewry's ranks, where many resent his Israel-critical views and endorsement of anti-Semitic enemies of the Jewish state, including Islamist militant groups Hamas and Hezbollah.

Following an acrimonious exchange of allegations during Corbyn's campaign for Labour leader, he and representatives of British Jewry may now find they need to mend fences and figure out a way to work together.

"The problem is not that Corbyn is an anti-Semite or a Holocaust denier – he is neither," said Dave Rich, a spokesperson for the Community Security Trust, British Jewry's main watchdog. But Corbyn "seems to gravitate towards people who are, if they come with an anti-Israel sticker on them."

In fact, Corbyn recently said he has some Jewish ancestry. He told the *Church Times* that while his immediate family is Christian, he has a "Jewish element" in his background Britain's *Jewish News* reported.

In the interview with the Christian publication, he described himself as "not anti-religious at all," adding, "I go to churches, I go to mosques, I go to temples, I go to synagogues. I find religion very interesting. I find the power of faith very interesting."

Corbyn, 66, who has visited the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel nine times, publicly endorsed a blanket arms embargo on Israel and the boycott of Israeli universities involved in weapons research.

Jonathan Sacerdoti, a Jewish political commentator and journalist, said Corbyn's election "and failure to convincingly and definitively distance himself from his endorsements of anti-Semitic entities is sure to embolden the anti-Israel camp, and its anti-Semites."

Ambrosine Shitrit, co-founder of Yad B'yad, a right-leaning British anti-Semitism watchdog, called Corbyn's election "one of the most tragic things to have happened to Labour."

Corbyn's Jewish critics have said that if he is to be trusted, he must first clarify or backtrack from a string of gestures he made toward anti-Semitic individuals and groups.

Famous among those gestures was his use during a speech he made in 2009 of the term "friends" to describe activists from Hezbollah and Hamas.

"Tomorrow evening it will be my pleasure and my honour to host an event in parliament where our friends from Hezbollah will be speaking," Corbyn said of members of the Shiite Islamist militia and political party, whose leaders have made numerous anti-Semitic statements.

On Hamas – a Palestinian Islamic military and political group whose charter proclaims "a very great and very serious struggle against the Jews" – Corbyn said, "I've also invited friends from Hamas to come and speak as well. Unfortunately the Israelis would not allow them to travel here."

Labelling Hamas a terrorist group, Corbyn added, was "a big, big historical mistake."

In another widely cited incident, Holocaust denier Paul Eisen wrote that Corbyn donated money to his Palestinian advocacy group, Deir Yassin Remembered.

Corbyn denied the claim and said during a television interview in July that he did not agree with Hamas and Hezbollah. He called them friends only, he said, as a figure of speech. He defended his talks with militant Islamists by comparing them to right-wing Israelis, "who have the same view possibly that the State of Israel should extend from the river to the sea."

Jeremy Corbyn WIKICOMMONS PHOTO

His explanations failed to convince supporters of Israel and Labour Jews, including lawmaker Ivan Lewis, who following Corbyn's election quit his position as shadow secretary of state for Northern Ireland.

Lewis challenged Corbyn to attend a meeting on anti-Semitism on the political left, and Corbyn accepted last week. The meeting, Lewis said, is meant in part to address "Corbyn's support in the past for people who have used anti-Semitic rhetoric."

Corbyn faces a chorus of other Labour critics, including former British prime minister Tony Blair, who say the Labour leader's radically socialist views on the economy will either split Labour, make it unelectable as a ruling party or both.

One of the most dramatic twists in Corbyn's strained relationship with British Jewry's establishment unfolded on Aug. 14, when the *Jewish Chronicle* – neither a right-wing publication nor one prone to making unfounded claims – warned in an editorial that Corbyn risked being "regarded from the day of his election as an enemy of Britain's Jewish community."

Speaking for what the paper said was "the vast majority of British Jews," the *Chronicle's* unusually harsh-worded editorial spoke of "deep foreboding at the prospect of Corbyn's election as Labour leader."

Yet British Jews also have an interest in working with Corbyn, as evidenced in a Sept. 12 statement by Simon Johnson, CEO of Britain's Jewish Leadership Council, an umbrella group with representation by the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

Despite "a number of concerns regarding some of Mr. Corbyn's past connections," Johnson wrote, "We will, as we always have, find ways of working with Her Majesty's Opposition on matters relevant to us." He added, "We hope that the Labour movement remains a welcoming environment for members of the Jewish community, many of whom have lifelong commitments to it."

Johnson's statement reflects a mutual need by Corbyn and the British Jews for co-operation. This need will prevail – perhaps through a succession of low-key, trust-building encounters – over the current atmosphere of distrust, according to Keith Harris-Kahn, a London-area Jewish sociologist and editor of the Jewish Journal of Sociology.

"It's a very bad idea for the Jewish community to not have workable relationships with the major opposition party," Harris-Kahn said, citing the community's need to avoid partisanship and promote its interest in various British parliaments.

For Corbyn, Harris-Kahn said, "as a politician aspiring to be the prime minister of a multicultural country, it's a very bad idea for him to be alienated from the majority of one significant British minority." ■

Saudi Arabian ambassador remains head of UN human rights panel

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
NEW YORK

The Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United Nations was re-selected to chair an influential panel on the Human Rights Council, sparking the ire of human rights activists across the world, a UN watchdog group revealed Sept.20.

Faisal bin Hassan Trad was first appointed to head the five-member group of ambassadors – known as the Consultative Group – in June. The UN ambassadors of Greece, Algeria, Chile and Lithuania make up the rest of the panel, which is charged with selecting applicants from around the world to fill more than 75 positions "with mandates to report and advise on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective," according to a UN document.

UN Watch, an independent Geneva-based NGO, claims Trad's selection to chair the panel went intentionally unreported by UN diplomats.

Riyadh had initially campaigned to head the UN Human Rights Council altogether, but dropped that bid in June.

UN Watch executive director Hillel Neuer said in a statement that it was "scandalous that the UN chose a country that has beheaded more people this year than ISIS [the Islamic State] to be head of a key human rights panel. Petro-dollars and politics have trumped human rights.

"Saudi Arabia has arguably the worst record in the world when it comes to religious freedom and women's rights, and continues to imprison the innocent blogger Raif Badawi," Neuer added, in reference to the Saudi liberal activist who was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes, despite international outrage over his case.

Badawi, a 31-year-old father, co-founded the Saudi Liberal Network Internet discussion group. He was arrested in June 2012 under cybercrime provisions, and a judge ordered the website to be closed after it criticized Saudi Arabia's notorious religious police.

The Saudi Supreme Court's decision to uphold Badawi's sentence in January is final and cannot be overturned without a royal pardon.

Saudi Arabia consistently ranks among "the worst of the worst" on Freedom House's annual survey of political and civil rights. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

Jewish Life

Isabel Rocamora, right, and a screenshot from *Faith*. MARI LUZ VIDAL PHOTO

Jerusalem inspiration behind Koffler exhibit

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The first time artist and filmmaker Isabel Rocamora visited Jerusalem, she was spellbound by the prayers she heard as she walked through the Jewish, Muslim and Christian quarters of the city.

"There's this real sense of fervour, of prayer, of the connection with the beyond, with God. And then you open your eyes, there's a separation wall, there's flags, there's checkpoints and there's fear on all sides. I thought to myself, 'What a shame, what an irony,'" Rocamora said.

Her walk was the inspiration for *Faith*, a 22-minute installation film that looks for common ground among the three major religions in Jerusalem. *Faith* is premiering as part of Rocamora's first Canadian solo exhibition, *Troubled Histories, Ecstatic Solitudes*, at Toronto's Koffler Gallery until Nov. 29.

In the film, an Orthodox Jew, a Sunni Muslim and a Greek Orthodox Christian say their morning prayers in the Judean Desert, each one shown side by side on separate screens. The men pray, sometimes simultaneously, in settings that are connected to their religions. The Jew, Michael Cohen, prays in the Kumran Valley, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found; the Christian, Rev. Issa Taljieh, prays in the Wadi Qelt, where one of the ancient monasteries was built, and the Muslim, Feras Kazaz, the Qur'an reader at Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque, worships at Nebi Musa, a Muslim holy site dedicated to Moses. Rev. Taljieh, a Palestinian, prays in Arabic. "He's a bridge" between the Jew and the Muslim, Rocamora said.

She said the three men were happy with the principle of praying beside other religions. Rocamora chose settings without buildings, without "constructed history," she said, so that "we're able to feel the religious rituals more directly."

Commenting on the similarities and differences between the worshippers, she added that when you observe the men praying, you realize how similar some of their prayer is and how distinct some of it is. "The similarity invites the viewer to think of these men as brothers and as human beings," she said.

Rocamora said that *Faith* poses the question: what would be possible if dialogue between people in conflict in the Middle East took place on a spiritual level? "Of course, priorities would have to change," she reflected. "They would not have to be financial, economic or territorial. They would have to be approached from the angle of spirituality."

Rocamora, who comes from a Roman Catholic background, described herself as a believer who has "a strong spirituality" but isn't religious.

Along with *Faith*, Rocamora's exhibit at the Koffler includes *Portrait in Time* and *Gesture*, a single-screen film that examines the transformation of the self's core over the course of an individual's history; *Horizon of Exile*, a dual-screen film about female identity, and *Body of War*, a single-channel film that reflects on the transformation of man into soldier.

Body of War was exhibited at the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art in 2012 and originally brought the Edinburgh-based Rocamora to Jerusalem. For the 20-minute film, released in 2010, she interviewed soldiers and ex-soldiers who can be heard speaking in the work set on the Normandy beaches. "What interested me was the ways different wars engage the human being," she said.

Body of War includes footage of a fight, actually a sequence of moves from krav maga, a self-defence system developed for the Israeli military, between two soldiers. Then the action is slowed down and you're able to perceive "the humanity and care inside the gesture of violence," Rocamora said. At one point, one of the soldiers bites the other and "with slowing down, it becomes a kiss."

Rocamora installation films have been exhibited at museums and galleries around the world. "My works are between fiction and documentary," she said. Some of them, like *Faith*, are multi-channel. "Several screens," she reflected, "allow for an immersive feel as well as discussion." ■

For more information about Rocamora and her Toronto exhibit, visit http://kofflerarts.org and www.isabelrocamora.org.

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Psychological thriller set in totalitarian Czechoslovakia

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There is a great deal over which to marvel in *Innocence: Or, Murder on Steep Street.*

The narrative is riveting. The art of its telling is powerful. And the back story to its publication is itself worthy of recounting; a testament to the author's steely will to hallow memory and, in so doing, bring a semblance of balance to history's often skewed scales of justice.

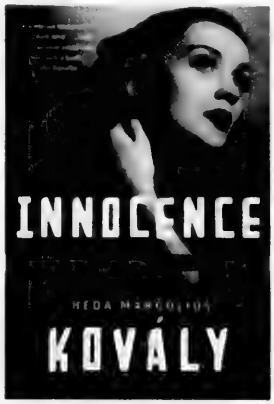
There is more than one murder in *Innocence.* A particularly gruesome one is the subject of the police investigation that provides the backdrop for the deft, slow, unravelling of the intricate layers of plot and character that hold the reader in thrall until the very last pages of the book. Late at night, a police officer is found stabbed to death in his car, which is parked on dark, gloomy Steep Street in Prague. His murder lies at the centre of a thick web of morally empty interconnections and interactions that choke and ensnare innocent lives.

The story unfolds in the early 1950s in totalitarian, Communist Czechoslovakia. State control is absolute. People live under suffocating conditions of constant, intrusive watchfulness. Personal happiness is defined by one of the key characters in the novel as merely "a good meal, an absence of suffering."

Imagine the works by Koestler or Solzhenitsyn about life in a police state. Imagine, too, the narrow, social and cultural strictures in the world depicted by Kafka. As skillfully as they, Kovaly depicts the desperate emptiness, the deep, crushing lack of purpose and pervasive fear of everyday life under totalitarian conditions.

The husband of one of the key characters, Helena, is arrested – taken without explanation, without warning, without charge, without reason. Helena's life then descends rapidly into an anguish of worry, alarm and life-sapping resignation. She describes her life's parameters.

"Reading was a dangerous thing for someone like me. It gave you something beyond your own sad, lonely life, and though it acted as a protective shield, it could not be used as a wall or screen, a thing to hide behind. You could sit at home alone by the stove experiencing all these sensational things: loving, fearing, fighting, even dying, all in the space of one afternoon and three cups of coffee. Slowly you forgot that the story came from somebody's head, and you began to expect the same pattern and rules in real life as in books. You deluded yourself into thinking that after every exposition came a climax and a resolution, every episode fit into every arc of the narrative and nothing happened without a purpose, since of course the story had to unfold smoothly and make some kind of sense. It was a dangerous drug."



Innocence: Or, Murder on Steep Street
By Heda Margolius Kovaly
Translated by Alex Zucker
(Soho Press Inc. 2015)

Helena is actually only a pawn being manipulated by "the system." Her life – her humanity, her existence, her worth as a human being – means nothing to the state authorities other than as a detail in a wider manipulation, a name in a dossier full of suspects' names, and ultimately, a trap by which to catch a larger prey.

Fear of betrayal constantly frames the behaviour of individuals. Colleagues at work might be informants. Friends might be unsuspecting targets of the Party decision-makers. In one particularly memorable scene, the author describes the mechanics and the impact of a seemingly innocuous betrayal.

"But then it hit me. A man had lost his life and I was responsible… I realized there's no such thing as a 'little' bad thing because nobody can predict what will come of it… it can grow into a big thing before you even know it…

"No one can do a thing to stop people like H… They're like earthquakes, or the plague. But they could never inflict so much misery if it weren't for little bastards like N… the little helpers who try to convince you it doesn't matter, there's nothing wrong with a little snitching… They make evil seem like a natural trivial thing… they blur the line between guilt and innocence, till eventually you accept it and murder just seems like an accident with nobody to blame."

Innocence is a psychological thriller. Since conversation with others is fraught with risk, only conversation with one's self is safe. Hence, Kovaly brings the readers into the private chambers of her characters' thoughts and pitiful, despairing lives. And she does so masterfully. She writes mournfully of the desolation of the characters' lives, but not in over-wrought prose. The language is sculpted by the harsh self-awareness of the extent to which other people control one's life.

Innocence is Kovaly's only novel, but it was not her only published work. Kovaly had earlier written *Under a Cruel Star*, an acclaimed memoir about her experiences in Auschwitz and then in the early years of Communist rule in Czechoslovakia.

Innocence is also partly autobiographical. It was written in Kovaly's native Czech language when she lived in London and Boston, and published in 1985 by a Czech-language German expatriate press. The book only appeared in the Czech Republic in 2013, after her death in 2010 at the age of 91.

In an elegiac introduction to the book, Kovaly's son encapsulates what lies ahead for the reader. "In the intensely complex psychological drama, the heroine, Helena Novakova, is an almost-autobiographical portrait of Heda during her most trying times… She depicts how she felt and thought, how the ordinary people around her behaved, how they tried to overcome the stranglehold of the Communist regime. Similar to the characters in Albert Camus' fictional universes, all of Heda's characters are guilty to various degrees, although they all declaim their innocence."

Kovaly's book is an important and rewarding read. ■

YIDDISH CORNER

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נו, אָט זענען מיר, אין די ערשטע טעג פון א נײ יאָר, און דער ייִדיש ווינקל געפֿינט זיך חיישער אין אונדזער "קאַנידיען דשרש ניזו."

פֿאַרוואָס האָבן מיר אָנטעקנעלייגט דעם פֿערער פֿאַר כּמעט צוויי יאָר? פֿאַרשיידענע סיבות– אָבער מיר זענען זיי בייגענקומען, אַרויסגעבלאָזט די שטרוי פון ווינקל און זיצן חיישער בײַם שפֿרײַבטיש.

אונדזערע ייִדיש רעדנער צײַלט כּעין נישט הײַנט אין די מיליאָנען. אָבער די חאָם געפֿינען זיך אין אנדזער היימלע – יונג און אַלט זיצנען שטאַלצע אין נעטרײַע פֿאַרשוואַנער פון מאַמע לשון און גלויבן אז ייִדיש האָט א הכּשך אין אונדזער פֿאַלקסלעבן.

וי אַלע וואָס שטייען אָפֿן שוהל פון ניי יאָר נעפֿינען איך עס וויכטיק צו נעמען אין חשבון וואָס האָט פֿאַסירט איבער די פֿאַרגאַנגענע מאָנאַטן – דאָס זיס און זויער אין לעבן – און פון דעם נעפֿינען א חיעג צו באַגרוסן דעם נײַ יאָר מיט האָפֿנונג.

אויבן אין שטייט דער האָפֿנונג פֿאַר שלום־בית; אז מיר זאָלן נעפֿינען דעם שכל איבערצוקומען די נעראָנגעלונגען וואָס שפּאָלטן אונדזער פֿאָלק ישראל.

איך שרײַב דאָ וועגן די מיאוסע שפּאָלטן וואָס חירכן אויף אַלע יידן – דאָ אין קאַנאַדע און נאָך שוועריער אין ישראל. וי אַזוי ענטפֿערט מען די באַגרעניצטע פֿראַגע – וער איז א ייד? איך פֿאַרשטיי אז די פֿראַגע איז קאָמפּלעקס. די פֿראַגע איז טויזנטער יאָר אַלט און ענטפֿערט זיך ניט אין איין מאָמענט. אין ישראל איז די פֿראַגע א טעאָלאָגישע אַז א פּאָליטישע.

איינער, דוד אַזולי, דער מיניסטער פון רעליגיעזע ענינים אין ישראל, האָט פֿראָקלאַמירט אז די וואָס נעהערן צום "דעפֿארם" שטראָם פון גלויבן זענען נישט יידן. פֿאַר פֿיל פֿרומע יידן איז דאָס אַן ענטפֿער און אַן אמת. אין אַזויליס שטרענג וערטער נעפֿינט מען די מיינונגען פון די וואָס האַלטן די לייענע פון רעליגיעזער מאַכט — א מאַכט וואָס וויל נישט אנערקענען אז ישראל איז א קאָלעקטיוו פון יידן וואָס גלויבן אין דער אייבערשטער אין פֿאַרשיידענע קאָמבינאַציעס אַרער זיצען פֿרײַדענקער און גלויבן אין גאַנצן ניט.

דעם מיניסטער האָט מען גיכן נענעבן א פּאָשע אויף די הענט אָבער די פֿראַגע שטייט נאָך צו פֿאַרענטפֿערן. די וואָס האַלטן די לייענע לאָזן זיי נישט אַפּ. אין א לאַנד וווּ טרוימענט רוסישע יידן זענען נישט אנערקענט וווּ יידן, און די וואָס האַלטן זיך וווּ "קאָנסערוואַטיוו" אַדער "רעפֿארם" מוזן שטיין.

איך וויים אז אַלע רבנים און רעליגיעזע פּאָליטיקער זענען נישט אזוי פֿאַרבײַסן וווּ דער מיניסטער און מען פֿראָבירט נעפֿינען א וועג וואָס אנערקענט אז וועג איינער וואָנט "איך בין א ייד" און פֿאַרבינדט זיך מיטן פֿאָלק ישראל – איז ער נעהיים א ייד. מיר טאָרן נישט פֿאַרגעסן אז די גאַנצע מאַכט פון יידן איז נאָר אין אונדזער איניקײַט.

א צײַטונג, די אונדזערע, וואָס יעדע וואָך שטעלט פֿאָר אַ גרויסע רבנים, א רעפֿארם, אָרטאָדאָקס, קאָנסערוואַטיוו און א פֿרײַדענקער, אין וויערע באַזונדערע אויסטײַטשונגען פון זעלבן פרשה איז א בײַשפּיל פון ייִדיש טאָלעראַנץ און דרך־ארץ. ס׳אַנערקענט, נישט קוקענדיק אַף די פֿאַרשיידענע הענג איינער קומט צו זיין ייִדישן גלויבן, אַז אַלע וואָס הוסן זיך יידן וואַרמען זיך אין די זעלבע סלבושים.

איך האָף שיערע לייענער, אַז איר וועט מוחל זיין די וויער פערזעגלעכע מיינונגען וואָס איך האָב פֿאַרגעסטעלט אין אונדזער ייִדיש ווינקל. אויב איר ווענט נישט מסכים –גוט. אויב איר זענט מסכים – אויך גוט. איך וויל אז אונדזער ווינקל זאָל זיין א פלאַץ וווּ אַלע ייִדישע מיינונגען זאָלן קענען געפֿינען אַן אָרט זיך אויסצודרוקן.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

Tributes pour in for violinist Jacques Israelievitch

STEPHEN CERA
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The recent death of the eminent violinist Jacques Israelievitch, 67, marks the end of a life devoted to music and the arts. The French-born musician succumbed to cancer in Toronto on Sept. 5.

I first met Jacques and his wife, Gabrielle, soon after their arrival in Toronto in 1988. He came here to assume the position of concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO), and would eventually become the longest-serving concertmaster in the history of the TSO, departing in 2008 after 20 years. He also served as the music director of the Koffler Chamber Orchestra at the Koffler Centre of the Arts from 2005 until its demise in 2014.

Israelievitch was a musician of high intelligence, vast experience, determination, enterprise, curiosity, and integrity. We became friends and colleagues, and I was honoured to perform as pianist with him in 2014 and earlier this year. He played the viola in our recitals – and of course, played it wonderfully.

Jacques was a tireless musician whose greatest joy was to rehearse and perform, whether as a solo violinist or violist, chamber musician or concerto soloist. His musical tastes were all-embracing, ranging from unaccompanied Bach through virtuoso romantic repertoire to demanding contemporary works. His appetite for music and art was unquenchable.

Visual art, especially ceramic art, was one of Jacques' passions. Upon his arrival in Canada, he tried to learn all he could about Canadian art. He and Gabrielle commissioned works from Canadian artists and employed Canadian craftspeople to build objects. They became charter members of Toronto's Gardiner Museum. Jacques undertook collaborations that combined music with the visual arts.

Jacques Israelievitch AL GILBERT PHOTO

> *Israelievitch was a musician of high intelligence, vast experience, determination, enterprise, curiosity and intelligence*

He was deeply committed to teaching violin, viola and chamber music in Toronto, at the Chautauqua Institution in western New York, and at master classes in China and Japan, among other places.

Glowing testimonials to his teaching were posted on Facebook soon after his death.

From Nicole: "Thank you for inspiring in me the greatest thing that any teacher could teach: not to be a mere pedestrian – to be different, and to do things your own unique way. Whether it be in musical performance or involvement in the community, those words guided my every experience and brought me to where I am today. So I thank you for igniting that fire 10 years ago, in the 10-year-old mind of mine. Your legacy will live with us forever."

From Jamie Kruspe, assistant concertmaster of Canadian Opera Company Orchestra: "RIP Mr. Israelievitch, you will be missed by all. It was an honour and a privilege to have been your student and work with you over the years. Thank you so much for having such a strong musical influence on me.

"I'll never forget what you taught me and how you inspired me during my studies at U of T and Chautauqua, but most of all I will miss making music with you in the Koffler Orchestra. It is going to be hard for me to accept that you're no longer here with us. I'll see to it that your unique and sincere style of playing lives on."

From Samantha: "Your teachings and love for the art will always be reflected in my playing. To the best violin mentor anyone can ever ask for, Mr. Israelievitch."

Other tributes came in from those he touched.

From the TSO: "With deep sadness we mourn the passing of our dear friend and former longtime concertmaster Jacques Israelievitch... he made immeasurable contributions to the orchestra during his tenure. Our deepest condolences to his family from all of us at the TSO."

From the Chicago Symphony Orchestra: "The Chicago Symphony Orchestra notes with sorrow the passing of violinist Jacques Israelievitch, who served the orchestra as assistant concertmaster from 1972 until 1978."

From Peter Herrndorf, president and CEO of the National Arts Centre: "Jacques Israelievitch performed many times with the TSO at the National Arts Centre, especially after our orchestras began to perform annually in each other's concert halls starting in 2004 as part of our special relationship. Our sympathies go out to his family and all his colleagues in the music community.

"The life of Jacques Israelievitch exemplified commitment and high professionalism, and will continue to inspire all those whose lives he enriched." ■

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CJN

Art show funds research on sleep disorders in youth

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Is there a connection between children's sleep problems and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)?

It's an issue Dr. Colin Shapiro, a psychiatrist specializing in sleep disorders, will address in a research project he plans to run in conjunction with the Youthdale Child and Adolescent Sleep Centre research program.

He said it is possible that many children who are being diagnosed with ADHD "may have a simple and very treatable sleep disorder."

Funding for this research project will come in part from an art exhibition featuring the works of 21 artists. The week-long show will be held at Metro Hall Rotunda starting on Oct. 1

The show is the seventh exhibition Shapiro has held with Youthdale Treatment Centres in support of research in child and adolescent sleep disorders. Youthdale, a children's mental health centre, offers residential, emergency and out-patient services to youth between the ages of 12 and 18.

Blue Lady by Stephen Selesnick

Shapiro said that through word of mouth, various international artists from the United States, France, Peru and Israel, along with Canadian participants have been involved in the show.

Into the Light by Deena Sherman

"In the exhibition this year we have a number of artists from far-flung places who have not exhibited before. These include the Sunshine Coast in British Columbia, Chicago and Boston."

About half the artists happen to be Jewish, he said. In fact, three of the exhibitors – Naomi Pollak, Stephen Selesnick, and Dr. Ashley Davidoff, are Shapiro's former schoolmates from King David High School in Johannesburg.

The South African-born physician said there was little information about sleep disorders when he began medical school in the early '70s.

As a medical student, Shapiro had the opportunity to do research in sleep for a month at Stanford University. He later completed a PhD at the University of Edinburgh.

In 1990, he was recruited by the psychiatry department of the University of Toronto. He started a neuropsychiatry department at Toronto Western Hospital, where he continues to practise today.

In his work with Youthdale, Shapiro dealt with sleep disorders.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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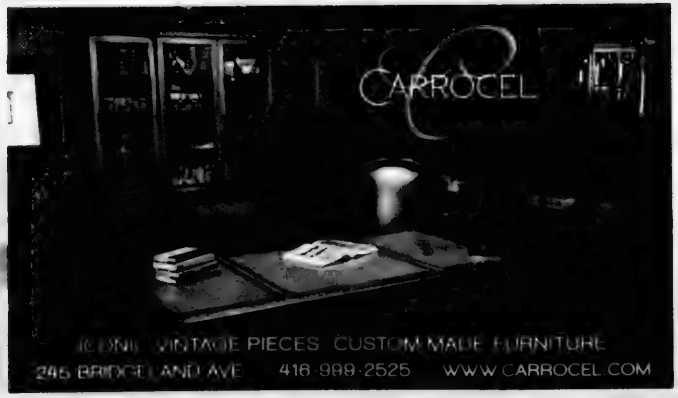

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

Maccabi Tel Aviv soccer team proud to represent Israel

DANIEL KOREN
dkoren@thecjn.ca

The Maccabi Tel Aviv 'fanatics' cheer on their side. FLASH 90 PHOTO

It's a glorious time to be a football fan in Israel.

In its European Cup qualifying match earlier this month, the Israeli national soccer team was able to pull off a draw against Wales, arguably a more formidable team, allowing the blue-and-whites to stave off elimination and maintain their bid to enter the 2016 tournament.

On a different but equally important field, the premier soccer club in Israeli football, Maccabi Tel Aviv FC, was relentless in its quest to make the Champions League for the first time in 11 years – a goal that was fulfilled following its 1-1 draw against FC Basel of Switzerland on Aug. 25.

The club's appearance in the Champions League club competition is its second time competing in the tournament in its storied history.

With the first round of the playoffs officially underway, Maccabi faced off against Chelsea on Sept. 16, losing 4-0. With several games still ahead, it is worth noting that the Israelis have ample chance to make up for the loss and prepare for their next battle against Chelsea, which has had its worst start to a domestic top-flight season in 29 years.

It's also worth mentioning that Slaviša Jokanović, Maccabi's relatively new head coach, once sported Chelsea's royal blue jersey himself.

"I have been here for only two to three months, so I am particularly happy with our performances in Europe and at the start of the season," Jokanović said in an interview. "I feel proud with what my team has done and the way in which they performed so far, but one doesn't sum things up after such a short period of time, as an entire season is ahead of us. I believe we can be a better team and there is a lot of room for improvement."

Despite whatever obstacles lie ahead, not to mention being placed in Group G along with three teams who have a better ranking, Jokanović is grateful for the "great opportunity" to compete against Europe's top teams like Chelsea, Porto and Dynamo Kyiv, who have all won European titles in the past. On his playing against his former Chelsea teammates in Stamford Bridge, he admits there are "no cards up a sleeve" when you are a football coach.

"I am happy because I can wear the Maccabi colours with pride and represent Israel in Europe. My job is to try and make as successful a job as possible with Maccabi against Chelsea."

Tal Ben-Haim, an iconic member of Israeli football for over 13 years, says he's thrilled to have played his first Champions League match with Maccabi, particularly since he left Tel Aviv for Bolton Wanderers FC back in 2004 when Maccabi first qualified for the Champions League.

"This is coming full circle for me," Ben-Haim told *The CJN*. "I must admit that at first I felt this twitch, especially as they [Maccabi Tel Aviv] were drawn against Bayern Munich, Juventus and Ajax in '04. After I had signed for Maccabi this summer, it was almost clear to me, and I can't explain why, that we would qualify for the Champions League. I guess I had a lot of faith and recognition in the quality of this squad and strength of this club."

Despite the team's "shaky start" with their defeat to Chelsea, Ben-Haim said Maccabi has proven it has a right to be where it is because of its hard work, professionalism and character.

"This is nothing short of amazing," he exclaimed. "This is a great achievement for the club, the players, the staff, the fans and everyone involved with Maccabi Tel Aviv and Israeli football."

While nobody on the team is sugarcoating it – Maccabi Tel Aviv is the true underdog of this tournament – no one is saying they can't succeed either. After all, who doesn't love a good underdog story?

"In football, almost everything is achievable, but one has to remain realistic as well," Ben-Haim said. "This is an extremely difficult task, especially if you take into account the calibre of teams we are facing in our group. But at Maccabi, we never look that far ahead, we always focus on the upcoming match."

According to Jokanović, perhaps even more important than winning is playing the game gracefully, with respect and aplomb.

"We must respect all our opponents, but more importantly, respect ourselves as a club, which obviously includes our fans. We must give everything we have on the pitch, remain focused on the task at hand and be brave with our approach to the games."

Maccabi Tel Aviv: A Cinderella Story – which is what the documentary will be called if the Israelis are able to persevere through the first round – continues with the team's next match against Dynamo Kyiv on Sept. 29. ■

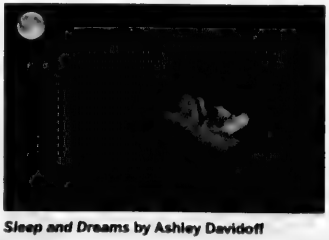
Artists donate 50 per cent of sales to sleep research

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

He said a patient in his adult clinic suggested he hold an art exhibit to raise awareness about children's sleep problems. "We now have this annual art exhibition."

The artists who participate donate 50 per cent from the sale of their pieces to the Youthdale sleep research program, Shapiro said, noting that buyers get a tax receipt for 50 per cent of the purchase.

Many artists were interested in participating in the show when they heard that the funds raised would be directed to mental health issues affecting children and adolescents, Shapiro said. "Some people re-exhibit. It's been an organic process."



***Sleep and Dreams* by Ashley Davidoff**

The proceeds from an earlier show have helped fund a study on sleeplessness and driving, which is still in process. Shapiro said they are researching the impact of sleepiness on the driving patterns of young and older adolescents.

The question to be answered is whether or not sleep deprivation causes younger adolescent drivers, ages 16 to 17, to have more accidents than drivers who are 22 to 25, he said.

Another study conducted in 2012 focused on sleep problems among children with fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). Shapiro pointed out that these youngsters – brain damaged in the womb by alcohol consumption during pregnancy – have the second highest rate of sleep problems among children and adolescents.

Shapiro said the study indicated that the majority of these children have abnormal secretion levels of melatonin, a brain hormone that induces sleep and this research has improved clinical results. "Our success rate in treatment has already gone from 10 to 80 per cent." ■

The exhibit runs from Oct. 1 to Oct. 7 at the Metro Hall Rotunda, 55 John St. The opening is Oct. 1 from 6 to 8 p.m., but the art works can be viewed weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends.

The Socialite

Canadian Friends of the Israel Museum

CFIM board member, Tamara Fine and event host, Wayne Squibb

Jeannie Tanenbaum and host, Maureen Squibb

CFIM national co-chairs, Wendy and Elliott Eisen

Earle O'Born, Sandra Pierce, and event chair Janice O'Born

Len Glickman and CFIM Toronto co-chair, Caurie Bregman Glickman

Garden Party

The Canadian Friends of the Israel Museum (CFIM) put on an extraordinary garden party this summer! Chaired by Janice O'Born and held at the home of Wayne and Maureen Squibb, the evening culminated with the unveiling of a limited-edition print by internationally renowned artist Olafur Eliasson created to mark the Israel Museum's 50th anniversary. Funds raised support free admission to the museum for Israeli children of all religion and ethnicities. ■

The Socialite

CFIM board member, Allen Ruben and David Spiro

CFIM board member Judy Osten and Jackie Shulman

CFIM board members Pauline Menkes, Patti Menkes and Genia Elkind

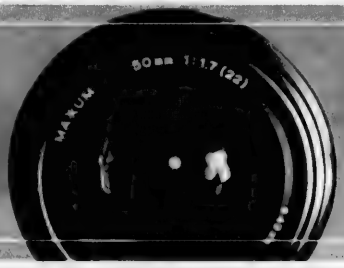
Debra Campbell and Jill Reitman

Ariella Rohringer and Camille Dan

Jeannie Tanenbaum, James Snyder, director of the Israel Museum, and Lilly Fenig, CFIM board member

LYLE LEVINE PHOTOS

The Socialite wants your photos. Email thesocialite@thecjn.ca for submission details.



What's New

SEPT. 24 - OCT. 1

by Lila Sarick

Sunday, Sept. 27

YIDDISH CLASS
Improve your Yiddish skills. Classes for all levels start today, 10 a.m.-noon, Beth David Synagogue. Call 416-635-2883, ext. 5189, or www.committeeforyiddish.com.

FRIENDS OF YIDDISH
Friends of Yiddish holds its annual membership breakfast with entertainment by **Arkadi Tulchinski and Michael Ziskind,** 10:30 a.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Free for members/$15 for guests. RSVP **Sandy** 416-736-8073; 416-458-1440 or email yiddish18@yahoo.ca

SUKKAH CELEBRATION
Morris Winchevsky School celebrates Sukkot in Dufferin Grove Park, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., with crafts, stories and music. 416-789-5502.

Temple Kol Ami celebrates Sukkot at Thornhill Woods Park, 5:30 p.m. with food, singing, crafts.

Monday, Sept. 28

AUDITIONS
Medina Theatre is holding auditions for a staged reading of *Taking Sides.* Auditions at 7 p.m., performance, Nov. 4. 416-638-2716.

Tuesday, Sept. 29

THE CHORALAIRS
The Choralairs Choir starts its new season, 7-9:30 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre. The group performs in retirement homes. No audition needed. Call **Sally,** 416-636-8247, or email choralairs@gmail.com

Wed., Sept. 30

SAVE A CHILD'S HEART
Save a Child's Heart hosts an "UnGala" fundraiser, 7 p.m. at the Montecito. For tickets, www.saveachildsheart.ca or 416-324-9113.

Deadline reminders:
Deadlines will change for the holidays. The deadline for the issue of Oct. 8 is Sept. 24. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Golfing for kids

Members of the Titan Equity UJA Golf Classic committee show off the cheque for $470,000 raised at last month's tournament. All proceeds will go toward special education programs and initiatives in Jewish day schools.

POMEGRANATE GUILD
The Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles meets at Temple Sinai, 7:30 p.m. Guest presenter is **Susan Avishai**, who specializes in deconstructing fashion to create artistic works. www.pomegranateguild.ca

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
JoAnn Goldwater discusses "My trip to Lithuania and Latvia," Temple Sinai, 8 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 1

BOOK CLUB
Elaine Newton reviews *The Children Act,* by **Ian McEwan,** Temple Emanu-El, 1 p.m. $10.

YIDDISH VINKL
Hindy Nosek-Abelson discusses the challenges of translating Yiddish songs into English, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St., noon. $20, includes lunch.

Coming Events

CHILDREN OF SURVIVORS
Baycrest and the Miles Nadal JCC offer support groups for adult children of Holocaust survivors. Call **Shoshana Yaakobi,** 416-785-2500, ext. 2271, or email syaakobi@baycrest.org

FALL CLASSES
Maccabi Canada's volleyball program for children age 9 to 16 starts Oct. 19/20. Call 416-398-0515, ext. 204, or email michele@maccabicanada.com

Morasha adult classes, taught by **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, Seymour Epstein** and **Rabbi Roy Tanenbaum.** Fall session starts Oct. 14. All classes at Beth Emeth Synagogue. Call 416-789-7400.

Temple Sinai offers Hebrew classes for "beginners plus," starting Oct. 6, and intermediates, starting Oct. 1. Call 416-487-4161.

Temple Har Zion offers beginner and advanced beginner Hebrew classes, Thursday nights. www.templeharzion.com

Pride of Israel Synagogue offers conversational ulpan Hebrew with **Yael Lev** for beginners (must read Hebrew), intermediate, and advanced levels. Daytime or evening classes. Free learn to read Hebrew. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

Israeli dancing for beginners and intermediates starts this fall Sunday evenings at Temple Kol Ami. Email mayat.cohen@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Jewish Teen Philanthropy Board of Greater Toronto is looking for teens in grades 9-11 interested in making a difference in the community. Call **Aron,** 416-635-2883, ext. 5238, or akatz@ujafed.org

DANI is looking for volunteers in their 20s and 30s to connect by phone, email and in person with adults with disabilities. Call 905-889-3264, ext. 226, or email ssokol@dani-toronto.com

Baycrest needs volunteer musical performers to share their love of the arts and to perform for elders. Contact **Joanne Ingell** at jingell@baycrest.org

Volunteers needed to sell poppies Oct. 30-Nov. 11 in the Bathurst Street and St. Clair Avenue area for the Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch. Email sgs823@sympatico.ca.

The Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch, Ladies Auxiliary, is looking for women who have had a spouse, parents or grandparents in the armed forces to join. Call **Eva Kay,** 905-886-5119.

Volunteer drivers needed once a month to drive vision impaired seniors to social events. Call **Sheila,** 905-731-9667.

LEGAL SUPPORT FOR WOMEN
Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

LECTURE SERIES
Temple Emanu-El's lecture series begins Oct. 19, 2-4 p.m., with **Iain Scott** discussing "The four greatest scenes in opera." Other presenters include **Dr. Geoff Fernie**, **Dr. Carolyn Harris**, **Dr. Colleen Carney**, **Mike Daley**. $45/series; $15/lecture. 416-449-3880.

BE THE MATCH
Adath Israel Congregation holds a stem cell and bone marrow clinic, Oct. 25, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

BOOK CLUBS
Heather Kassel discusses "Genius and eccentricity as seen in the movies *Mr. Turner*, *The Theory of Everything* and *The Imitation Game*." (Movies not shown on review night). Oct. 20, 8 p.m. at Adath Israel Synagogue. $50/$85 for the 6-session series; $10/$15 per review. **Beverley**, 416-499-6920.

LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS
Chai branch of National Council for Jewish Women of Canada invites women over 50 to join. 416-633-5100.

SUKKOT HAPPENINGS
Beth Emeth Synagogue presents "Steak in the sukkah," Oct. 1. RSVP by Sept. 29, 416-633-3838 or steakinthesukkah.eventbrite.ca. $36.

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds a family Sukkot festival, Oct. 4, 10 a.m. RSVP, 416-385-3910.

SPOUSAL BEREAVEMENT GROUPS
Baycrest Terraces/Wagman Centre offers a spousal bereavement group for men and women over 55 starting in October. **Shawn Fremeth**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2986.

Adath Israel Congregation offers bereavement support groups for widows, Oct. 15-Nov. 19, 1-3 p.m.; for men and women Oct. 20-Nov. 24, 7:30 p.m. Free for members, $180 for non-members. **Nilly**, 416-635-5340.

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JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster par-ents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

◗ **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Swing dance classes with **Kris Light**, Oct. 13-Dec. 1. Dance lesson at 11 a.m., social dance at noon. No experience or partner needed.

Temma Gentles discusses her "Torah Stitch by Stitch," project, Oct. 1, 1:30 p.m. Register 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or email lisar@mnjcc.org.

◗ **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and Ping-Pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9.

Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis.

Exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, starts Sept. 30 at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526, or colinb@mnjcc.org

◗ **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Sept. 30, **Ashira Duo** performs concert of Jewish music, 1:30 p.m.; Oct. 1, lecture by Canadian Diabetes Association, 1:30 p.m. Book club meets Tuesdays at 1 p.m.

◗ **Association of Jewish Seniors** holds a Sukkot lunch, Oct. 1, noon, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. Guest speaker **Stephen Adler**, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. $20/$25. Must pre-register 416-635-2900, ext. 458.

◗ **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Bridge, partners required, Tuesdays, noon; Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; Bring your knitting and needlepoint and relax Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.; Casino Woodbine Oct. 14.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

◗ JCC players, after-school musical theatre program starts Oct. 7, 6:30 p.m.

◗ Music for babies and toddlers starts Oct. 15, 10 a.m.

◗ Sports with Jay, parent and tots, starts Oct. 18, 10 a.m.

◗ Family ceramics (ages 4-12 with an adult) starts Oct. 18, 2:30-4:30 p.m.

◗ Beginner mah-jong starts Oct. 7, 10:30 a.m.

◗ **Kevin Courrier** presents "Reverence and regard: the complicated women of the silver screen," Oct. 7-28 at 1 p.m.

◗ **Sue Miller** teaches "The harvest painting workshop," to celebrate Sukkot, Oct. 18, 1-6 p.m.

◗ **Osnat Lippa** presents "Celebrating women artists," starting Oct. 13, 1 p.m.

◗ Bridge level 1 starts Oct. 8 at 10 a.m.

◗ All levels welcome to join daytime and evening ceramics classes.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

◗ *Shmita/Seven Generations* is in the gallery until Sept. 30. The artists participate in Culture Days, Sept. 27, 1-4 p.m.

◗ The gallery is looking for an Israeli visual artist for March 2016. Submissions close Nov. 1. Contact deannad@mnjcc.org

◗ Shabbat family party, spaces still available, Fridays, 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Email anniem@mnjcc.org

◗ Kat-Ka Team, Sept. 27, 1-3:30 p.m., grades 2-8. Play, create and explore with Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror. RSVP shaliach.gesher@gmail.com

◗ Accessible yoga for people of all abilities. Companion and support persons welcome. Sept. 27-Dec. 6, 1 p.m. liviyam@mnjcc.org or ext. 330.

◗ Sense of Spadina walking tour, Sept. 27, 11 a.m. Tour begins at the Kiever Shul, 25 Bellevue Ave. 416-635-5391. $12/$15.

◗ The Ward walking tour, Sept. 27, 2 p.m. Tour begins at Nathan Phillips Square. Free. Ext. 154.

◗ From tummies to mummies: Pre- and post-natal bootcamp, aquafit and yoga classes. Call ext. 567.

◗ Register now for Hebrew and Yiddish classes starting Oct. 13. Call ext. 388 or anniem@mnjcc.org

◗ *Defending the Caveman*, a comedy about how men and women relate to each other, previews Oct. 1, 2; performances Oct. 3, 9, 10 at 8 p.m. www.thecaveman.ca

◗ Ukulele Circle, open house with **Jodi Pape**, Sept. 27, 2-4 p.m.

◗ **Osnat Lippa** discusses the art of Degas, Oct. 19, 26, 1:30 p.m.

◗ Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**. 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

◗ Family Sukkot art workshop, Sept. 27 at 4:30 p.m.

◗ PJ Plus is a parent/tot program for children ages 18 months to 3 years. Sundays, starts Oct. 18, 10 a.m.

◗ Social skills groups, swimming, sports for children with autism on Saturdays.

◗ Painting: colour theory, technique, compositional development, Thursdays, starts Oct. 8, 1 p.m.

◗ Royal Conservatory of Music presents "The enigma of Russian music," Oct. 20, 7 p.m.

◗ Daytime or evening beginner mah-jong classes start the week of Oct. 8.

◗ Bridge level 1 starts Oct. 7, 7 p.m.

◗ Glass fusion workshop to make a Chanukah menorah, Oct. 10 at 7 p.m.

◗ J Reads book club discusses *The Invention of Wings*, Oct. 27, 10:30 a.m. ■

www.cjnews.com

WRY BREAD

The candidate we deserve

David Levine

My name is Stewart Lieber, and it gives me great pleasure to announce my candidacy for the office of prime minister of Canada. This is not an office I had intended to seek, but recent developments have convinced me that I have an important role to play.

I won't bore you with my background or domestic policy. As a candidate, the only things you need to know about me are my allegiance to Israel and the number of relatives I lost in the Holocaust – which, my research confirms, exceeds all other candidates.

I'm encouraged by a recent (and deeply scientific) B'nai Brith survey of Canadian Jews, which revealed that in this coming Canadian election, Israel-related issues are most important to 65 per cent of you. What a relief to see others recognize that terror is much more likely to strike than economic turmoil, and that the boycott, divestment and sanctions "movement" should be of greater concern than poverty and affordable housing – and far more important than the environment, which failed to make the list! I knew at once that I had to declare my candidacy.

You see, I'm no career politician. I'm just like you.

Like you, I love the State of Israel with all my heart and soul. I have visited four times, and maintain several close Facebook friendships with Israelis.

Like you, I fear for her existence so viscerally that my life is a lonely tale of dread and anxiety. I scan the Internet constantly for news of an unprovoked nuclear catastrophe. I'll randomly dial an Israeli phone number once an hour, every hour, just to be sure things are OK.

And, like you, I believe that I am personally responsible for Israel's welfare, and for every misfortune that befalls her.

Most importantly, we all know that when it comes to Israel, the worst is always just about to happen.

Our great country was founded on the values of community, charity and morality. It brings me no end of grief to watch our current leading candidates betray these values and undermine the things we love most about Canada.

My platform, however, is rooted in our shared values, the same values that inspired me to run.

I am, first and foremost, a staunch supporter of our true country, the great State of Israel, no matter the issue or context. While we can all agree that most of my fellow candidates deserve to be tried for war crimes over their spineless capitulation to the forces of boycott-fuelled jihad, I say that even Prime Minister Stephen Harper's rhetoric fails to match his actions. Has he ever risked the fundamental well-being of his country for the State of Israel? What are his true priorities?

If elected, I pledge to address Canada's ongoing support of Israel through tangible and immediate action: I will divert all federal tax revenue to Israel and reassign all military personnel there. Several of our "national luxury assets" will be nationalized and liquidated, so that the proceeds can help our brothers and sisters in their time of despair, including: the maple syrup industry, all sports franchises, museums and national parks, coastal fishing rights and Ryan Gosling.

As a show of solidarity, the Maple Leaf at the centre of our flag will be replaced with a red Star of David.

These are temporary measures, of course, designed only for sustainability until the day that war no longer threatens to erupt in the Middle East.

It has been only days since I first declared my candidacy, and already my campaign has been beset on all sides by a predictable phalanx of cynics and haters, each more anti-Semitic than the last. I've been laughed at, taunted and slapped in the face. I've been told repeatedly that my campaign is too different, too Jewish, too far outside the rules of Canada's electoral system – but I refuse to be placated, or made to understand. I will make my vision a reality, with your help.

Please join me. Together we can make Canada make Israel a better place. ■

@adavidlevine

Mazel Tov!

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Lindsay Rothman & Jesse Barksdale were married by Rabbi Reuven Poupko at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Montreal on June 14.

Mazel tov Kevin Wein on your appointment to the Superior Court of Maricopa County, Ariz. Love, parents Eddy & Anita, brother David, and grandmother Celia Bullion

Mazel tov Julia on your bat mitzvah in Israel. Parents Avi & Barbi Koifman, grandparents Frank & Judith Wilson, David & Rebeca Koifman and family.

Gavin Liam Apple was born Sept. 9 to proud parents Greg & Jennifer, brother Nathan, and grandparents Lawrie & Michelle Apple, Alex & Ilene Bronstetter.

Welcome Stella Jade! Proud parents Jessica & Jonathan Solomon. Overjoyed grandparents Andrea & Barry Hutkins, Jane & Ben Solomon. Great-grandmothers Freda Hutkins, Dorothy Millman.

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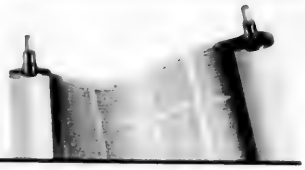
Parshah

Ha'azinu | Deuteronomy 32:1-32:52



Rabbi Aaron Katchen says Sukkot forces us to confront just how little control we have in life
Rabbi Michal Shekel looks forward to a refreshing and nourishing beginning to the new year
Rabbi Howard Morrison explains the message of hachnasat orchim embodied by the sukkah

Aaron Katchen

For a seven day period you shall live in booths (sukkot). Every resident among the Israelites shall live in booths, in order that your [ensuing] generations should know that I had the children of Israel live in booths when I took them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God (Leviticus 23:42-43).

I grew up in Calgary, and my memories of Sukkot involved snow and sitting in the sukkah in a ski jacket. When I lived in England, it was sitting in the rain. And here in Toronto, we seem to always have wasps join us in the sukkah. Why do I keep sitting in my sukkah (besides the basic answer, that God told me to)?

The rabbis of the Talmud dispute how to understand the booths from the verses above. Rabbi Akiva states that the verse is meant literally, and refers to actual booths. Rabbi Eliezer explains that the sukkot refer to the Clouds of Glory (*Ananei HaKavod*), which represent God's divine protection in the wilderness.

For me, this metaphor is apt and necessary. My religious identity informs me of my free choice and agency in life, which is good. But Sukkot comes around and I move out of my house and into my wooden booth (with snow, rain and wasps), and I am forced to confront how little control I really have in life. When I can achieve the understanding of the things I really do not control, and become whole with them, this is where the gift of Sukkot really lies.

Sukkot has another commandment: "And you will be only happy – ach sameach" (Deuteronomy, 16:15). By recreating the tenuous existence of being in God's protection, and thus being truly aware of what I do and do not have control over, this is where real happiness can be achieved and known.

Chag Samayach – have a happy Sukkot. ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen, who is based in Toronto, directs Ask Big Questions Canada in partnership with Hillel.

Michal Shekel

May my discourse come down as the rain,
My speech distil as the dew,
Like showers on young growth,
Like droplets on the grass. (Deuteronomy 32:2).

These words are part of Moses' last poem, which praises God and chastises us.

Water is often taken to symbolize Torah. Both rain and dew are necessary to nourish plants. Depending on the time of year, we pray for one or the other. If Torah is water, then we are the plants nourished by this holy water in its many forms.

Biblical poetry doesn't rhyme. It employs a technique called parallelism, applying synonymous words in different parts of the verse. This is evident in the verse above by the use of the synonymous parallels discourse and speech, rain and dew, showers and droplets, young growth and grass.

However, similarity is not exactitude, and the differences in word choice have been parsed by commentators. Sforno sees the abundant showers providing some droplets to each of us. Abravanel views the rain as Torah available to all, while precious droplets are the insights that reach only a select few. Rashi, always practical, points out that vital rainwater can be inconvenient, for example, if you're on a journey.

Water can be perilous. *Tfilat Geshem*, the prayer for rain recited on Shmini Atzeret, concludes: "For blessing, not curse, for life, not death, for abundance, not scarcity."

If Torah is like rain, can it be equally troublesome? In Ha'azinu, Moses makes us take a long hard look at ourselves. Forced to face what we would rather ignore, our nature revealed by this biblical poem can be disturbing.

We are still in the season of repentance. Ha'azinu is a splash of cold water on the face: it may be jarring, but it is also a refreshing start to the new year. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is the executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis and spiritual leader of Har Tikvah Congregation in Brampton, Ont.

Howard Morrison

Several mitzvot surround the festival of Sukkot, including taking the four species and dwelling in the sukkah. Beyond the requirements of the holiday are some beautiful customs as well. One is ushpizin, inviting exalted guests into the sukkah. Based on Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition, the seven exalted guests are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David. Biblical texts describe these heroic figures as shepherds of our people. On each of Sukkot's seven nights of Sukkot, one in particular is acknowledged.

Throughout the year, the Jewish home is an open one, modelled after the first Jewish couple, Abraham and Sarah, who were known to sit by the entrance of their tent to welcome those in need. To this day, especially on Shabbat and festivals, we welcome the needy, relatives, and old and new friends into our homes. On Sukkot, however, there's an added dimension. Time and space, past and present, become intertwined in the Sukkah. People we know in the present enter the Sukkah and interact with the values embodied by heroes of our past. A conversation that spans the ages takes place. Thus, the Sukkah is the ultimate place where the practice of hachnasat orchim, the welcoming of guests, takes place.

While most prayer books and works of art depict the ushpizin as the seven male biblical figures mentioned above, different kabbalistic traditions also enumerate seven female biblical figures to be invited as well. The lists of heroic women vary depending on the source. In some contemporary practices, the male figures are teamed with appropriate female figures. One suggestion extends the invitation to Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, Rachel, Miriam, Deborah, and Ruth.

In preparation for Sukkot, I encourage everyone to fulfil the mitzvot of taking the four species and dwelling in the Sukkah. If you've never observed the custom of ushpizin, consider it as well. Learn some of the attributes associated with our biblical heroes. Speak about them in the Sukkah and integrate the values of the past with the realities of the present. ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior clergy at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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Simchat Torah ideas as the holidays come to a close

FRANCINE KURLANDSKI
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Simchat Torah marks the end of a month of celebration and introspection, where family and friends get together both in the shul and in the home. Traditionally, the foods we eat at this time of year are ones that have stuffing, to represent a year of fullness, and my mother, like so many other mothers made stuffed cabbage, but here are some new twists on the stuffing motif that I hope that you and your family will enjoy.

Stuffed peppers with ground beef and rice

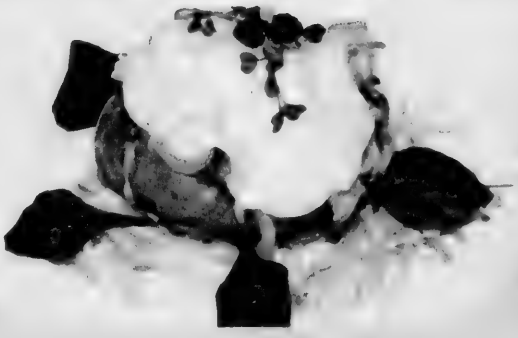
- ❑ 1 1/2 lb. lean ground beef
- ❑ 6-7 bell peppers, green or red, or your choice
- ❑ 1 tbsp. olive oil
- ❑ 1 tbsp. pareve margarine
- ❑ 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- ❑ 1/2 cup celery, chopped
- ❑ 1 can diced tomatoes
- ❑ 1 cup tomato sauce
- ❑ 1 garlic clove, crushed
- ❑ 1 tsp. dried oregano
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. dried basil
- ❑ 1 tsp. salt, divided
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. pepper, divided
- ❑ 2 tbsp. sugar
- ❑ 1 egg lightly beaten
- ❑ 1 1/2 tsp. pareve Worcestershire sauce (optional)
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups cooked rice

Preheat oven to 350.

Cut tops off peppers. Remove seeds and membranes. Place peppers in a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain and set aside.

In a large skillet, heat oil and margarine over medium heat. Sauté onion and celery until tender. Add tomatoes, tomato sauce, garlic, oregano, basil, 1/2 tsp. salt, 1/4 tsp. pepper and sugar. Simmer for 10-15 minutes.

In a large bowl, combine egg, 1/2 tsp. salt, 1/4 tsp. pepper and Worcestershire sauce. Add raw ground beef, cooked rice and 1 cup of the tomato mixture. Stuff peppers with meat mixture and put into an ovenproof baking dish. Pour remaining sauce over peppers. Bake for 65 minutes.



Salmon stuffed baked potatoes

- ❑ 4 large baked potatoes
- ❑ 1 can salmon, drained and deboned
- ❑ 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- ❑ 1/4 cup cottage cheese
- ❑ 3/4 cup grated cheddar cheese
- ❑ Salt and pepper to taste
- ❑ 1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese.
- ❑ paprika to taste.

Preheat oven to 400. In a bowl, combine salmon, mayonnaise, cottage cheese, 3/4 cup cheddar cheese, salt and pepper. Mix well.

Scoop out the inside of baked potatoes and fill with salmon mixture.

Top with 1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese and sprinkle with paprika. Bake for approximately 10 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

Braised chicken with artichokes and olives

- ❑ 8 boneless, skinless, trimmed chicken thighs about 1 1/2 pounds
- ❑ sea salt
- ❑ freshly ground black pepper
- ❑ 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- ❑ 1 yellow onion, diced
- ❑ 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ❑ 1 tsp. turmeric
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. ground coriander
- ❑ generous pinch red pepper flakes
- ❑ 1 cinnamon stick or 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ❑ 1 bay leaf
- ❑ 2 cups chicken broth
- ❑ 2 tsp. grated lemon zest
- ❑ 3 tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ❑ 1 cup canned chickpeas, rinsed and mixed with a spritz of lemon juice, and a pinch of salt
- ❑ 8 thawed frozen or jarred artichoke hearts, rinsed
- ❑ 1/2 cup pitted green olives, such as picholine or manzanilla
- ❑ 2 tbsp. chopped fresh mint

Pat the chicken dry and season with salt and pepper. Heat the olive oil in a Dutch oven or heavy soup pot over medium-high heat.

Add the chicken, working in batches if necessary, and cook until well browned on each side, approximately 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate. Decrease the heat to medium.

Add the onion and a pinch of salt, and sauté until soft and slightly golden, approximately 5 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add the turmeric, cumin, coriander, red pepper flakes, cinnamon and bay leaf. Cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute.

Pour in 1/4 cup of the broth to deglaze the pot, stirring to loosen any bits stuck to the bottom. Stir in a pinch of salt and cook until the liquid is reduced by half. Stir in the remaining broth, lemon zest and 2 tbsp. of the lemon juice.

Decrease the heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the chicken, chickpeas, artichoke hearts, and olives. Stir gently to combine.

Increase the heat to medium-high and simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally until the chicken is heated through, about 5 minutes. Stir in the remaining tbsp. of lemon juice. Add lemon juice and salt to taste. Garnish with mint. Serves 4. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

Elizabeth May: Jews have been the heart, soul and conscience of Canada for a long time

YONI GOLDSTEIN
ygoldstein@thecjn.ca

Elizabeth May is currently in the midst of her third federal election campaign as leader of the Green Party of Canada, a post she has held for nine years. The member of parliament for the riding of Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C., spoke recently to *The CJN* about the upcoming election, Israel, accusations of anti-Semitism in her own party and the Syrian refugee crisis.

How is the campaign going?

I think it's going remarkably well for Greens, considering we have a certain amount of struggle to claim space and be heard.

We're gaining momentum for the first time ever for us in an election campaign. Usually when you go into an election campaign, people in public opinion polls will say, "I'll vote Green," but when it comes to the ballot box, they say, "Oh, maybe not." So, this is the first time that our public support levels across Canada, and particularly in British Columbia, are growing during the writ period. So, that's pretty encouraging.

Parts of our policy inspire people who used to vote Conservative – things like the fact that we're the most transparent party, and the most accountable. And we're respectful in Parliament – we never heckle. So, some of the more traditional Conservative voters are deciding that they want to vote Green.

At the same time, some traditional NDP voters are thinking they don't like the way their party is moving toward the centre. So for the other issues – for instance, trade agreements – we have former NDPers moving to the Green party.

And the biggest voting block that we are really going after are people who simply haven't voted ever, or for years. And that's, of course, the largest voting block in Canada in the last number of elections, the 40 per cent of people who don't vote.

What do you think Canada should be doing regarding the Syrian refugee crisis?

It's a disaster at many levels.

If you're looking for the single-largest instigating factor, you'd be talking about the brutal dictatorship of [Syrian President] Bashar Assad.

We abhor the existence of Islamic State (ISIS) , but in the context of Syria, ISIS is just one of a number of what we would normally consider terrorists and horrible

Elizabeth May, leader of the Green party

> *We really have to find a way to explain to people that it doesn't help the security of Israel to have Canada only support the most right-wing party in Israel*

organizations, like Al Qaeda and Al Nusra, allied against Assad. I don't there's a single group that I've mentioned that any Canadian would think could form a government in a way that respected human rights. We don't want to be aligned with Assad and Hezbollah any more than we want to be aligned with Al Qaeda, ISIS and Al Nusra. It's a terrible set of choices.

And in the midst of all this, there are the suffering innocents of Syria.

Right now, we need to mobilize. We should have been doing it years ago, but I think Canadians are demanding that there be a more urgent and robust response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

Where does the Green party stand on Israel?

We stand very firmly in support of the right of the State of Israel to exist and defend itself. We do think that there is a question of proportionality, so we have been critical from time to time of the decisions that [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu has made, but we are very mindful of campaigns that can verge into anti-Semitism.

We are very concerned about Palestinian rights and Palestinian justice, but we are also very concerned about any rise in anti-Semitism either in the region or in Canada.

I think that's the responsible position to take, and I think we are where most Canadians are.

Where do you stand on the boycott divestment and sanctions movement specifically?

We don't support it.

What do you say to Jewish voters who want to support a cleaner environment and some of your other positions, but are concerned that if they don't support other parties that they might be endangering Israel. Is there a way that voters can have both?

We really have to find a way to explain to people that it doesn't help the security of Israel to have Canada only support the most right-wing party in Israel. Israel – as a state, as a country, as a society, as a democracy – needs to be defended and supported by Canada, but Canada loses our influence in the world – we reduce the credibility of our statements – when we appear to be aligned with only one party.

We believe that the strongest way to defend the right of the State of Israel is to achieve a durable peace in the region. And that will occasionally mean that we don't agree with everything a particular political party in Israel does.

Take us back to the controversy last year after former Green party president Paul Estrin published a pro-Israel blog on the party's website and the backlash that ensued, which eventually led to Mr. Estrin leaving the party. How did the Green party handle the situation? Is there anything you wish you would have done differently?

Mr. Estrin didn't put the blog under his own name. That was the problem. He signed his piece as the president of the Green Party of Canada.

Paul is a very great guy, and I wish that I hadn't been in a remote location with no access to a phone when all this started to blow up.

The party executive talked to him, and he decided to resign. I reached out to him immediately and said, "Paul, let's keep you involved in the party – it would be great if you would stay on the executive in a different position other than president – or how about running, being a candidate in the election for the Green party?"

If I have any regrets, it's that I wasn't in a position to call Paul earlier. I sure regretted losing him.

Life is long, he's a young guy and he'll probably come back and work with us again. I sure hope so.

In the wake of that situation, it did seem to awaken people to the fact that there are some in your party who hold strongly anti-Israel views. Does that concern you?

I'm not aware of people in the party who hold anti-Israel views. But, of course, there are about 20,000 members and I don't know all of them. But certainly within the party leadership, within party policy, our debates are really respectful. The position that we came up with during the Gaza conflict called for more neutrality on the part of Canada and to work as hard as possible for a ceasefire and for peaceful solutions to the conflict. That entire debate happened in a spirit of respect and neutrality. And certainly, no one expressed any anti-Israel positions. That would have violated what we consider Green values.

Do you think Israel is being turned into a wedge issue of sorts in this election?

No, I don't think so. I think what's happened is, strangely enough, that the other three major parties seem to feel that even the most muted criticism of Mr. Netanyahu's actions is off limits.

I don't think a chill on the discussion is healthy in Canadian democracy, it would certainly be unacceptable were a discussion about the Middle East to give any aid, comfort or space to views that were anti-Israel in the sense of being against the right of the State of Israel to exist.

You have the ear of the Canadian Jewish voters. What's your pitch?

You have been the heart and soul and conscience of Canada on many issues for a very long time. This is not the time to wed yourself to one hardline position of a party that has done so much to make Canada a less compassionate place. And I would urge you to look at the Green party's policies and platform and see if you don't see yourself there.

If you don't, let me know, I certainly would apologize if we are not meeting the aspirations of Canadians who have done so much for this country. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

The life and times of a violin virtuoso

Backstory

FRANKLIN BIALYSTOK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The world of classical music, and humanity in general, lost a brilliant, kind and warm man, Jacques Israelievitch, who succumbed to cancer in Toronto on Sept. 5.

The tributes that have flowed into the media have rightly focused on his remarkable life as a violin virtuoso, but two other noteworthy perspectives on Jacques's life must be added – his role as the child of Jewish survivors of World War II and his devotion to his friends and family.

Israelievitch was born in 1948 in Cannes to Isidore and Simone, the eldest of five. Isidore was a prisoner of war, while Simone survived in hiding. Jacques was an infant when the family moved to Paris, and then to Le Mans, where his parents opened a womenswear shop. Initially successful, local anti-Semites instigated a boycott, placing the family in dire straits. At school, Jacques was in fights, and called *sale juif*.

Isidore and Simone instilled a love of music, and at an early age Jacques and his brothers Raymond and Edmond, took up the violin. Jacques was a prodigy, but the family could not afford to support his talent. Through a chance encounter between his teacher and her friend, his plight was conveyed to Germaine de Rothschild, wife of Eduard, who lived in a nearby chateau. Impressed with the child's brilliance, she paid for his instrument, case, records and a phonograph. When the family situation reached its nadir, Jacques was taken in to the children's home established by Mme. Rothschild. He soon left for Paris, and the rest is history.

When I asked Israelievitch why he chose to be a member of an orchestra instead of a soloist, he said: "In an orchestra, I have the opportunity to play all sorts of music, not just the violin repertoire. Further, I'm part of a collective effort where I develop professional and personal relationships that last for years. Finally, as a soloist, I'd be on the road, away from my family. I couldn't do that."

> *When I last saw him, he was bright and lucid, listening to Shostakovich*

Israelievitch, his wife, Gabrielle, and their sons, David, Michael and Joshua, were a tight knit unit. The family home was abuzz with lively discussions, friends dropping in, salon gatherings where Israelievitch and compatriots from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO) played, students arriving to study with their master. In 2008, when he turned 60, Jacques left the TSO, and after a 12-hour retirement became a professor of strings at York University in Toronto.

Jacques was devoted to playing modern as well as traditional classical music, in some cases commissioning new works. Among those composers that he promoted were the Canadian Jewish luminaries R. Murray Schafer, Murray Adaskin and Srul Irving Glick. He also played alternative music, in particular with his son Michael, a percussionist, that can be heard on their recording *Hammer and Bow*. He was also the founder and music director of the Koffler Chamber Orchestra from 2004 to 2014, artist in residence at Temple Sinai and at the Miles Nadal JCC, and played Kol Nidre at High Holiday services.

In February, he was diagnosed with inoperable cancer. Determined to go out on his terms, he chose to reject chemotherapy, as it would not allow him to play and teach. Despite an operation to rebuild his pelvic bone, he continued teaching and performing. In July, he launched an album of modern Canadian music and finished recording the Mozart sonatas, to be released next year.

During his final phase of life, Israelievitch was surrounded by family. When I last saw him, he was bright and lucid, listening to Shostakovich on his laptop.

"This is best summer of my life," he said. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

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Stanley M. Katz	Sep 6/15	83 Littleriver Court
Henry Kahn	Sep 5/15	1130 Regional Road 21
Helen Baker	Sep 6/15	22 Willowbank Blvd.
Leo (Jeep) Rosen	Sep 6/15	541 Finch Avenue, West
David Kornbluth	Sep 6/15	2106 Farrier Mews
Gary Pollack	Sep 9/15	61 Coldwater Court
Marvin Nash	Sep 9/15	980 Yonge Street
Irene Lantos	Sep 10/15	55 Ameer Avenue
Michael Weinstein	Sep 11/15	20 Shallmar Blvd.
Warren Edward Ruby	Sep 10/15	268 Ridley Blvd.
Dina Lieberman	Sep 10/15	431 Salem Avenue North
Laura Finkler	Sep 12/15	616 Avenue Road

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Beizerman, Erica	Sept. 1, 2015	4455 Bathurst St	Zwerling, Saul	Sept. 4, 2015	Private
Tangir, Maurice	Sept. 2, 2015	3560 Bathurst St	Mirenburg, Klara	Sept. 5, 2015	205 Hilda Ave
Jacobovitch, Abraham	Sept. 2, 2015	75 Shelbourne Ave	Michel, Lorna	Sept. 5, 2015	111 Avenue Rd
Eshcher, Benaya Yechiel	Sept. 2, 2015	27 Meadowbrook Rd	Lewis, Saul	Sept. 5, 2015	62 Maxwell St
Kopman, Toby	Sept. 2, 2015	343 Clark Ave	Raz, Ben Avi	Sept. 6, 2015	775 Steeles Ave W
Tausinger, Susan	Sept. 2, 2015	668 Roselawn Ave	Usher, Robert	Sept. 6, 2015	20 Parkland Crt
Benlezrah, Mair Elbaz	Sept. 4, 2015	7420 Bathurst St	Feigin, Raisa	Sept. 6, 2015	7 Townsgate Dr
Rosman, Sam	Sept. 4, 2015	485 Patricia Ave	Mintz, Saul	Sept. 7, 2015	11 Brentwood Ave
Zaldin, Estelle	Sept. 4, 2015	3560 Bathurst St			

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Inside

On the campaign trail

Gaffes, graffiti and debates highlight the week that was as the election heats up.
PAGES 6, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16

The five per cent solution

Rabbi Jay Kelman has a plan to make day school tuition affordable for families. **PAGE 11**

Shabbat

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	6:35 p.m.	7:36 p.m.
Montreal	6:15 p.m.	7:16 p.m.
Ottawa	6:23 p.m.	7:24 p.m.
Toronto	6:39 p.m.	7:40 p.m.
Winnipeg	6:47 p.m.	7:51 p.m.
Calgary	6:54 p.m.	7:59 p.m.
Vancouver	6:31 p.m.	7:35 p.m.

When Jews prospered in Iran

Author Sima Goel explains how life changed for the worse after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. **PAGE 8**

Understanding his father's pain

Michael Coren only came to truly know his dad after he was gone. **PAGE 7**

The fragility of life in the sukkah

Our rabbis discuss how a temporary structure can actually give us strength. **PAGE 4**

Jacob wrestles with an angel at the JCC

A look at Nathan Rapoport's unique sculpture and its message for a new year. **PAGE 38**

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Blue Jay plays on Yom Kippur, and a TV station uses a Nazi symbol

God didn't seem to hold it against him

Fifty years after Los Angeles Dodgers left-hander Sandy Koufax famously missed a World Series start on the Day of Atonement, Kevin Pillar, the Toronto Blue Jays' Jewish centre-fielder, played on both Erev Yom Kippur and the evening of the day itself in crucial games against the rival New York Yankees, who trailed the Jays for the AL East lead by 3-1/2 games going into the holiday. Pillar went three-for-three with a run, a home run and an RBI in a 6-4 loss in the first game, then drove in the winning run (after Yom Kippur had officially ended) in the second game, with a single in the bottom of the sixth inning.

Hey Jude, don't eat that food?

A Chicago TV station apologized for using a graphic of a yellow badge the Nazis forced Jews to wear during the Shoah to illustrate its report on the start of Yom Kippur. WGN aired the report the night of Sept. 22, hours after the holiday began. The badge – shaped like the Star of David and featuring the word "Jude," German for "Jew" – appeared atop concentration camp-uniform stripes and above the caption "Yom Kippur." Viewers quickly responded on social media. The station sought atonement for the graphic on Yom Kippur itself. "We are extremely embarrassed, and we deeply apologize to our viewers and to the Jewish community for this mistake," WGN said on its website.

An unfortunate mistake

SodaStream offers to help Syrians

Israeli company SodaStream has offered to take in Syrian refugees and employ them in its new factory in the Negev. Last month, SodaStream and the mayor of Rahat, which is near the beverage maker's factory, said they can absorb up to 200 families. Some 30 per cent of the 1,100 workers at the factory live in Rahat, a Bedouin city led by Mayor Talal Al-Krenawi. "As the son of a Holocaust survivor, I refuse to stand by and observe this human tragedy unfold right across the border in Syria," said SodaStream CEO Daniel Birnbaum. The offer is subject to government approval. SodaStream closed its West Bank factory and moved to the Negev after criticism from anti-Israel groups. ■

Gematria

40,000

The number of viewers for a Kol Nidrei webcast by California-based Nashuva.

2

The number of lawsuits filed in the United States over the chicken-swinging, pre-Yom Kippur kapparot ritual. One came from animal rights activists in New York, and another from a Detroit shul encountering red tape.

Quotable

There is no question that the lure of what's available on the Internet, what is available in general in the world, takes away from spiritual growth.

— Rabbi Paysach Krohn. Full interview p. 46.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz helps you celebrate Simchat Torah in Jewish & Digital.

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COVER ART BY JOSEPHINE MAIRZADEH

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Letters to the Editor

Another view of Norway

As a Norwegian who is not Jewish, living in Montreal, and married to a Canadian Jewish woman, I am happy that Gil Troy found Norway beautiful and that he describes most Norwegians as "hearty and friendly." But, when he jumps to stating that "there was an undercurrent of anti-Semitism, not just anti-Israelism, which overshadowed our vacation," I wonder what he is basing his statement on ("European anti-Zionism is actually anti-Jewish," Aug. 27).

My wife and I travelled in Norway this summer. We did observe the beautiful countryside and the high cost of wine, but failed to register the "undercurrent of anti-Semitism" that Troy is reporting.

When I was growing up in Norway in the 1950s and '60s, there was near universal and strong support for the new State of Israel. However, during the '70s, Norwegians were increasingly exposed to other sides of the conflict in the Middle East. In line with the country's commitment to UN activities, no less than 20,000 Norwegian soldiers served in the UN's UNIFIL peacekeeping force in Lebanon from 1978 to 1998. It has been widely documented and reported that the soldiers left Norway with strong sympathy for Israel, but became much more sympathetic to Palestinians during their stay.

This period became the turning point in most Norwegians' attitudes to Israel and the Palestinians. Gradually, from being seen as a conflict between good and evil, it was being seen as a conflict between two groups of people that both have legitimate interests and concerns. To stamp this point of view as anti-Semitism is profoundly incorrect, but unfortunately not uncommon in Jewish circles.

Although Troy states that he would return to Norway, I am not quite sure why, given the "undercurrent of anti-Semitism" that he describes. I can only hope that most people will reject this unjustified labelling, and take a chance to find out for themselves by visiting Norway.

Bjorn U. Ellingsen
Montreal

Services can be enjoyable

It is disheartening when a rabbi such as Avi Finegold tells us that the Yom Kippur services are boring ("High Holiday services are stressful," Sept. 10).

To someone who is at home in the synagogue and has taken the trouble to find out ahead of time what the prayers are about, the liturgy is dramatic and poetic. Any cultural event needs some preparation to be fully enjoyed, which is why the classics are taught in schools. Otherwise we might go to Stratford to see Shakespeare only to see someone go on the stage and announce: "We have cut out the long boring speeches that have hard words in them, and instead we are all going to sing 'Yabby-babby.'"

Rabbi Finegold might actually enjoy the particular boring bits he refers to (the Temple sacrifices) if he heard a trained cantor and choir perform one of the many dramatic musical settings that have thrilled generations of worshippers.

Charles Heller
Toronto

Changing attitudes aids Jews

I am sorry to hear that letter writer David Green ("Christians and Jews," Sept. 3) feels that the mass of Christians are subjecting him and his circle to anti-Semitism.

I was born in Toronto in the early 1950s and have witnessed a sea change in attitudes. I do not think that there has been a time with less Christian anti-Semitism, both systemic and indirect, than exists today. Growing up wearing a kippah in the Bathurst and Lawrence area was a totally different experience for me than it is today. Going by a Catholic school meant walking through a gauntlet of pennies, garbage and spitballs being hurled at me by the students. Entering a bowling alley after school with friends meant risking a beating by other kids. Going to a public school meant facing an administration hostile to Jews, being forced to take off your kippah and saying the Lord's Prayer.

Orthodox shuls were full of congregants rushing in to say *Yizkor* on yom tov and then rushing off to work, as there was no concept of reasonable accommodation.

When I finished law school, none of the Jewish students in my class found employment in major law firms, and not because they were not qualified. To see a kippah on Bay Street or in court in the 1970s was a rare event.

I have worked for the last 36 years dealing with lawyers and clients of all religions and backgrounds and have never encountered anti-Semitism in the workplace. I would suggest that the picture Green paints may have been the story in the past, but is not representative of Toronto in 2015.

Morris Sosnovitch
Toronto

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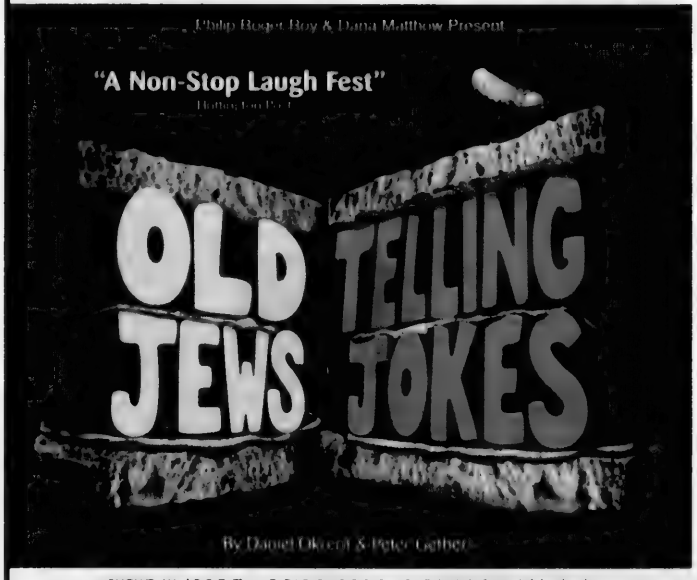

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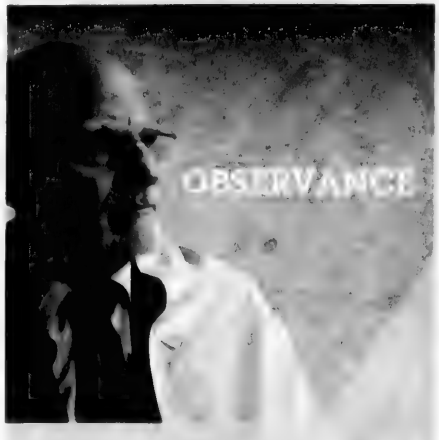

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Open to the sky on Sukkot

In the sukkah, we're reminded that we're not alone, that we can find protection, and that as fragile as life seems to be, it's what allows us to celebrate

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Fishman: There are many messages and much symbolism associated with the sukkah. I'm interested in focusing on the sukkah's roof, the schach.

We are told that the schach should be made of something that once grew from the ground, that there should be more shade than sunlight, and that one should be able to see the stars when looking up though the schach.

On the surface, this all sounds so romantic, so warm and fuzzy. Yet upon closer inspection, there is something deeply fragile and vulnerable about the sukkah's roof. Peering through so as to see the stars is another way of saying that the roof has holes in it, while the requirement for more shade than sun is akin to a building project that's never quite finished.

Rabbi Splansky: The stars we see through the schach are the same stars Abraham set his gaze upon when God promised him countless descendants. The way you describe the holes in the roof as an incomplete building project reminds me of the custom to leave a small section of our so-called permanent homes undone, too, in order to anticipate the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the messianic era.

The sukkah also works as a vehicle for time travel. Each year with our kids, we play "Ushpizin Time Machine." Over dinner in the sukkah we take turns travelling back in time to visit with characters from Jewish history, or someone from the Jewish future.

Rabbi Fishman: Sukkot is associated with simchah. In one of our previous exchanges, you pointed out that this word is best translated as "joy." I think that what allows for this season to be lived so fully is the fact that the schach is so fragile.

Our houses are built of bricks and mortar, and yet we never celebrate our houses. What we celebrate instead is the Jewish home. The home is the place where we learn to share our deepest blessings with others – as the famous book title about life in the shtetl reminds us, "Life is with people."

We don't celebrate our buildings of stone, but rather our buildings of connection and relationship. Ultimately, this delicate roof encourages us to celebrate the bonds we create by reaching out across the divide. Perhaps this is also why the schach must allow for transference.

Rabbi Splansky: One mitzvah of Sukkot is to "dwell in sukkot," another is to "rejoice."

But what if the schach leaks rain into your soup and invites cold wind or mosquitoes? What if you are miserable in the sukkah? The greater mitzvah is to rejoice, so we are permitted to go indoors for our festive meal. The mitzvah challenge, however, is to find a way to rejoice despite exposure to the elements, to feel the embrace of God's shelter.

It would be cruel to expect this of a person who is without a home, but for those who are only without a reliable roof a few days a year, it is a good lesson.

Rabbi Fishman: Kabbalistic texts call the sukkah the "shelter of faith." The Torah teaches us to be careful at precisely this moment, as we are bidden to leave our security and enter into a realm of faith and hope. Dwelling in such a structure metaphorically draws our gaze upward, as if to say that through the thin covering of the sukkah lies our true security.

Never have we needed the message of the sukkah more. We are reminded of what grounds us and gives us the humility to make our way in this world – that we are not alone, that we can find protection, that as fragile as life seems to be, it is that very fragility which allows us to celebrate.

Rabbi Splansky: In Israel, it is common for palm branches to be used for schach. In Canada, it's pine. In Indiana, it's corn stalks. Meanwhile, a California vintner named Benyamin Cantz uses old vines from his vineyard.

Cantz asks, if we use the leftovers from our fields and forests for schach, what does God use for the roof of God's sukkah? He suggests that perhaps God uses the discarded human sins left over from the Ten Days of Repentance.

Nothing goes to waste and nothing is without a purpose. The husks of our transgressions are made holy and given purpose. ■

How to reach us

Vol. XLV, No. 38 (2,214)*

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Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation:
July 14, 2015

Postmaster: Please return 2985 and changes of address to CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7.
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From the Archives | Look both ways

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Children wait to cross the street on the opening of Eitz Chaim Talmud Torah on Viewmount Avenue in Toronto in 1956.

SeeJN | Wishes for the New Year

Prime Minister Stephen Harper examines the shofar presented to him as a gift by the Jewish Russian Community Centre of Ontario at a meeting with Rabbi Yoseph Y. Zaltzman, left, and Rabbi Mendel Zaltzman on Sept. 22 as the rabbis explain the significance of Rosh Hashanah.

From Yoni's Desk

The miseducation of Alex Johnstone

How can you not know about Auschwitz? I mean, really.

And yet, there was Alex Johnstone, NDP candidate in the Ontario riding of Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, admitting last week she had no knowledge of the most infamous Nazi death camp, a place where more than one million people died during the Holocaust.

Never heard of it, she told the media, after an intrepid reporter unearthed a 2008 Facebook comment in which she jokingly compared the electrified fence posts surrounding Auschwitz to, of all things, a penis. (She also managed to spell "Polish" incorrectly.)

People make mistakes, sure. And seeing as we've only just finished atoning for our own errors, perhaps we can forgive Johnstone's, too. But her ignorance should not go unchecked, and if Ontario's education curriculum – which Johnstone is surely familiar with, given her years of service as a school trustee – failed to clue her in to what happened at the hellhole that was Auschwitz, then perhaps the Jewish community can assist.

And who better to take on the task than an actual Auschwitz survivor?

So, Ms. Johnstone, allow me to introduce you to Max Eisen.

Eisen was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in the Hungarian transports of 1944. His family was murdered there and in the Majdanek death camp. Out of approximately 60 family members, only three survived the concentration camps.

For the last 22 years, Max has been speaking about his experiences at Auschwitz on behalf of the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre in Toronto, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center, and Names, Not Numbers, among other groups. He talks to elementary, high school and university students, police officers and politicians about the horrors he witnessed. A few years back, he even made a presentation at Hamilton City Hall.

Auschwitz was a place of brutality and dehumanization, Eisen told me over the phone last week. "You were fortunate to live from second to second... One minute was like 1,000 years."

"There were no quarters given to anybody," he said. "You were either being starved to death or beaten to death, or for sure you went to the gas chambers.

"I have seen the worst that barbarians can dish out," he added. "I've seen it. I've smelled it."

Eisen himself almost didn't live to tell of the destruction he witnessed. He said he was "barely hanging on" when an American tank unit liberated him on May 6, 1945. So when I told Eisen about Johnstone, he just couldn't believe it. "For us survivors to hear this is very painful," he admitted. "To claim ignorance – you can't tell me that."

The good news is there is no shortage of material to help fill in Johnstone's Auschwitz blind spot – documentaries, memorials, testimonials. Eisen suggests that she read Elie Wiesel or Primo Levi. (Eisen's own memoir is set for release next year.)

"Let her sit in on a few sessions of high school Holocaust education," he recommended. "There are so many ways to get educated. There's no excuse."

And if all that isn't enough to correct the miseducation of Alex Johnstone, Eisen has one more idea.

"I would be more than happy to educate her," he says. ■ — YONI

REFLECTIONS

Like father, like son

Michael Coren

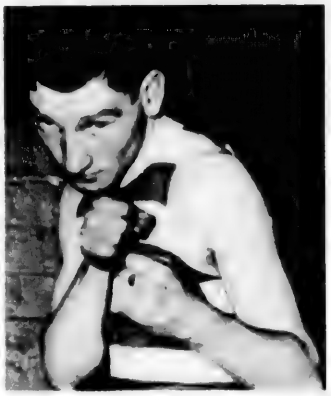
My father would never have considered himself a symbol of the Anglo-Canadian experience. Actually, he'd probably have wondered what the hell you were talking about. Not that he was lacking in intelligence. Far from it. He was intensely sharp, eager for knowledge, widely travelled and well-read.

One of his childhood friends was playwright Harold Pinter – they attended Hackney Jewish Youth Club together – but while Pinter went on to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, Phil Coren became a cab driver. Dad picked Pinter up once in London's West End. They hadn't seen one another in years, and Pinter said, "You know Phil, you're in the honest profession. Mine is just a sham."

Dad was a working-class Jew from tough, rough Hackney in London. He left school at 15 and two years later was in the Royal Air Force's Bomber Command. The idea of someone from his class and ethnic background going to university was laughable.

He boxed as a boy – a lot of Jewish kids did back there and back then – and made a name for himself with his fists in the RAF and then after the war as a gifted amateur. Phil Coren was quick, good-looking, streetwise and, after the clawing terror of war, bored and restless.

Like many men of his age, he couldn't settle down and decided to see more of the world. First was New York and then, because of visas and his British passport, he came up to Toronto for a long-term stay. He worked at Eaton's and at the job interview was asked about the origins of his name. It was code of course, from people who still embraced a cultural anti-Semitism. But Phil Coren's cockney accent confused them, and when he said his family had originally been Irish Protestant Corcorans, nobody seemed the wiser.



A young Phil Coren strikes a boxer's pose.

> *Phil Coren was quick, good-looking, streetwise and, after the clawing terror of war, bored and restless.*

It was all the more absurd in that on Sundays, he wasn't at a Presbyterian church but playing semi-professional soccer for a local Jewish team.

He left Canada in late 1950 and never returned. When I was a boy, he sometimes spoke of the "good times" in Toronto and Ottawa, and how rich everybody seemed compared to postwar Britain, but he never gave us many details. It was as though there was something painful at the core of it all.

In 1986, I was invited to deliver a lecture at the University of Toronto, met a beautiful young woman, fell in love and married her a year later. Thus son followed father to Canada, except this time the move was permanent. But we were married in a Roman Catholic church, and dad simply wouldn't attend the wedding and never visited us in Canada. Mum came over, and we went to Britain. That was the best it was going to be.

Then in 2000 he suffered a stroke. This fit, active man suddenly had the vitality trashed and thrashed out of him. It broke my heart watching him fight to form words, to walk and to be. Yet from that oppressor came a strange liberation. He said he would visit us. Mum and dad, my parents, flew to Canada, and for three weeks we showed Phil Coren his old haunts and arranged meetings with some of his old buddies.

He'd lived on Spadina Avenue all those years ago, and we drove up and down that long, changed road until he said, "Here, it was here." He got out of the car, walked for a few moments, and then put his head in his hands and began to cry. I hugged him, told him it was OK. He looked at me and said, "I left it too long. I've left it too long."

The last I saw my dad alive was at the end of that trip, as he walked arm in arm with my mother through the departure gate at Pearson Airport in Toronto. A few days later, he had a second stroke, fell badly, and died in hospital shortly afterwards.

After his funeral in London, I went back to my parents' home, where I had grown up, and I sat in his room and wept. I had to sort through his papers and was constantly jolted into tears as I read notes and letters and saw photographs showing how proud he was of my family. Why, then, couldn't he have broken through the old feelings and visited us earlier?

Then I understood.

In an old box file were keepsakes from half-a-century ago. At the bottom, as though hidden, was a photograph of a young Phil Coren with his arm around a lovely young woman. As I looked closer, I realized they were standing in front of the Toronto house in which he had lived. Attached to the photo with a rusted paperclip was a letter.

"It just can't happen Phil. I am so sorry. My parents don't hate Jews, but you're not Catholic, and if I married you, they would never speak to me again. I can't do that to them, and I can't do that to me. It would never work. I'm sorry."

There was no name, no address and I've no idea who she was. Yes, I have tried to find out. I do, though, now know why he felt the way he did and why he wouldn't visit.

Did he leave it too long? I don't know and I will never judge. What I do know is that I miss him very much indeed and that every time I walk or drive by that part of Spadina, I have to fight back tears. ■

Michael Coren is an author and broadcaster. He can be reached at mcoren@sympatico.ca

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ROMSPEN

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 1, 2015

Grieving for the home I once knew and loved

Jews once prospered in Iran. But after the Islamic Revolution, things changed, and escape became the only option

SIMA GOEL
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The aroma of jasmine and roses always makes my heart pound. The delicate scents remind me of the Persia of my childhood – Shiraz, splendid with its gardens and fountains, its public buildings decorated with Persian calligraphy.

But Islamic Iran is a different place from the one I hold in my heart. Ever since the arrival of the mullahs in 1979, Friday lunchtime prayers have always preached one basic message: Death To America! Death to Israel! Death to England! The Islamic government led by the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, has clearly and repeatedly expressed its intentions. I grieve for my country of birth and for the havoc it wishes to unleash.

Iranians know their history. They remember that Persia was once the largest empire in the world. They understand power and politics. Iranians saw how, in the 1970s, America and its allies offered weapons and training to Afghan mujahideen in their conflict against the Russians. They also observed how those same rebels later used those weapons against the Americans themselves. When members of the Iranian-Islamic government declare, "Death to America!" it is not rhetoric. They mean it. And history shows that they do what they say they will. We must take the message seriously.

I was born in Iran. I know the country and I love its people. During the reign of the Shah, the Jewish community prospered. He was good for us, and we were good for him. At the time, there were no university quotas for Jews. We could learn, and work in professions that suited us. We had Jewish schools, kosher shops and synagogues. In the late 1970s, there were 100,000 Iranian Jews, and as long as we avoided politics, we had a place.

Although under the Shah we prospered, the old claws of anti-Semitism still scarred us. At the age of six, I had my own interaction with this evil. As I played with a new friend in the park, the girl's mother recognized that I was a Jew. She pulled my friend away, muttering, "*Najest* – dirty, impure Jew." I still cringe, remembering this experience. Under the Shah, the word of a Jew was equal to that of a Muslim in court. But on the playground, the narrow-minded dictated their own rules.

Sima Goel

After the revolution, life changed dramatically.

Muslim principals replaced the Jewish ones at Jewish schools, and Shabbat was no longer a respected holiday. It became difficult to import religious items because the trade in religious objects suggested to the paranoid government an alliance with Israel. All Iranian women, including Jewish ones, were obliged to wear the hijab. The government slowly rescinded many of the social advances made by the Shah in his effort to bring Iran in to the modern age.

After Iran became an Islamic state, we lost the comparative ease we enjoyed in former years. Schools edited references to female poets and social scientists. Modern music was forbidden, as was classical. Fanatics often took the law into their own hands to police social behaviour. The testimony of a Jew in court became worth only half of that of a Muslim.

Rumours circulated, serving to frighten people into accepting draconian changes. Was it true that women who showed too much hair could have acid thrown in their faces?

Nobody dared take a chance, and so half the country swathed itself in robes.

The atmosphere of fear was part of an effective strategy to obtain compliance.

Throughout history, Iranian Jews had lived under different rulers and ideologues. We adapted to the most difficult of circumstances, always remembering that the bodies of our ancestors lay mouldering in the soil long before the first Muslims ever stepped foot in rich and beautiful Iran.

But here, on the other side of the world where I live openly as a Jew, I look to the politicians for guidance and protection, and I am dumbfounded. I cannot believe that we have offered the Islamic Iranian government access to nuclear technology and have removed the economic sanctions they loathed. It's a comedy; it's a circus; it can't be real that we give to this international bully the most brutal and dangerous ammunition ever created. Many believe that the mullahs will funnel the new money into supporting terrorism, and with their nuclear capacity, destabilize the whole world.

Because I needed freedom as much as I needed oxygen, I fled Iran at 17, risking my life for the unknown rather than accepting the mullahs' doctrines. When I look back at the time before the revolution, it seems as if I had once lived in a story in *The Thousand and One Nights* of Scheherazade. In those distant days, I walked with my father on narrow streets. Behind the high walls, families lived together and prayed for peace. I could hear the laughter of happy voices and the echo of traditional music.

It was a life where we expressed ourselves softly in public places and with confidence in our homes.

We were as much a part of the country as the stones in the hills. We were Iranian Jews of Shiraz.

That life is gone.

As the Jewish year begins anew, we are grateful for the blessings we have already received and for the abundance that surrounds us. But for the sake of our children and the generations to come, we must safeguard these gifts. If we cannot take back the access to nuclear technology from the Iranians, then at the least we must share our thoughts with our leaders and make them understand that this deal is foolhardy and can never advance the cause of peace and stability.

Roses and jasmine need fertile ground, gentle breezes and peace if they are to grow. So do our children. ■

Sima Goel is the Montreal-based author of Fleeing the Hijab: A Jewish Woman's Escape from Iran.

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JOE RIVIETZ

Eglinton-Lawrence debate stays polite and collegial

PAUL LUNGEN
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If the near-capacity crowd at the Beth Torah Congregation was expecting fireworks at an Eglinton-Lawrence candidates debate Sept. 21, they may have left a little disappointed.

There was nary a Donald Trump among the hopefuls vying to represent the riding in the Oct. 19 election. Instead, spectators were treated to a polite debate, respectful collegiality and a recitation of each party's talking points on the issues. The partisan crowd did its part, providing ovations for their candidates at various points.

There were no knock-out punches in the debate, which featured Liberal Marco Mendicino, the NDP's Andrew Thomson and Tory MP and Finance Minister Joe Oliver.

Rabbi Yossi Sapirman moderated with questions on various topics, including relations with Israel, the anti-Israel boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement, anti-Semitism, the danger posed by Iran, the economy, affordable housing, refugees and First Nations.

The event was sponsored by B'nai Brith Canada as part of its IMPACT 2015: National Debate Series, which features debates in ridings with large Jewish populations in Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg.

On Israel, each of the Eglinton-Lawrence candidates emphasized their personal and their party's strong support. Mendicino began by professing his party's and leader Justin Trudeau's "unequivocal support of Israel." He called the Jewish state "a friend [and] ally" that shares Canadian values and is the only democracy in a volatile region.

He credited Prime Minister Stephen Harper for standing with Israel and said "it will be no different under Justin Trudeau."

Marco Mendicino, left, Joe Oliver, centre, and Andrew Thomson FACEBOOK PHOTO

Oliver said the Tories' strong support of Israel would continue. He referred to Canada's UN voting record, saying it was more supportive of Israel than when the Liberals held power. How can the Liberals be trusted, he asked, "particularly when the Liberal leader says one thing to the Jewish community and another to the Iranian community?"

Mendicino interjected, saying the remark was "beneath the dignity of your office," and Israel should not be "a wedge issue."

Referring to the BDS movement, Oliver said "we will oppose any attempt to undermine [Israel's] economic viability and the ability to defend itself."

Mendicino said Trudeau had helped defeat a BDS proposal at McGill University, his alma mater. He said that as a prosecutor in the 2010 Toronto 18 case, in which a number of young men were charged with plotting terrorist crimes, he understands the security concerns of the Jewish community. The accused were driven by hatred for the Canadian way of life, including fundamental freedoms. "What the case taught me is that you cannot enjoy those liberties unless you are secure," he said.

Thomson, who held several senior portfolios in the New Democratic government of Lorne Calvert in Saskatchewan, including finance minister, said NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair told him "there is absolutely no doubt that Israel has the right to exist and be recognized," Thomson said.

Turning to the BDS movement, Thomson said "we are of course opposed to that."

He said the NDP would like to see the re-introduction of a law to address Internet hate, likely referring to the repeal of Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

On the recent Iran deal, designed to delay that country's nuclear program by 10 years, Thomson said the key to it is "verification every step of the way... I am skeptical of the deal with Iran." As to the suggestion Canada resume normal relations with Iran, he said "we believe at this point the best we should seek with the Iranians is to provide consular services within the country."

"Iran is an existential threat to Israel," Mendicino stated. "It is within its constitution, and this is deeply problematic."

He pointed to Iranian support for Hezbollah and Hamas, two terrorist organizations, and said Iran cannot be trusted. But the P5+1 deal is not based on trust, he said. "It is based on verification." The Liberal party would not lift sanctions unless there is verification of the deal, he added.

Oliver noted that his government suspended diplomatic relations with Iran in 2012 and has designated the Iranian Revolutionary Guards a terrorist organization.

Trudeau wants to re-establish full diplomatic relations "before Iran does anything to redress its appalling record on human rights," Oliver said, adding that a Tory government would retain sanctions connected to Iran's human rights record.

Oliver and Mendicino clashed, mildly, when the latter claimed Trudeau had said the Liberals would consider reopening Canada's embassy in Iran if Iran complies with conditions attached to the P5+1 deal. Oliver said Trudeau didn't make reopening the embassy conditional on anything.

Much of the debate was about economic policy. Oliver said the Tories were best positioned to steer the economy through turbulent times, while Mendicino said the Liberals would invest heavily in infrastructure and cut taxes to the middle class, and Thomson said the NDP would balance the budget and cut small business taxes.

During the exchange on the economy, Oliver corrected Mendicino's statement that oil was priced around $30 a barrel (it's $47, he noted) and later pointed out, to counter Mendicino's claim that he wasn't a strong enough advocate for his own community, that the Tories pledged $2.6 billion to Toronto for the SmartTrack transit program. He also said his last budget allocated $42 million to Baycrest to create the Canadian Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 1, 2015

What really are our community's priorities?

Mira Sucharov

In time for the new year, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) has published its list of priorities. There are several takeaways from the process.

Through an online survey and in-person focus groups, CIJA asked Canadian Jews to signal which issues the organization should prioritize in its advocacy efforts. The survey – provided to me by CIJA staff at my request, though I recall filling it out when it was issued – provided a dozen or so options, ranging from issues related to anti-Semitism; affordable housing and poverty relief; religious freedom, minority rights; positive Israel education; countering the boycotts, divestment and sanctions movement against Israel; Holocaust education; the cost of Jewish education; immigration and refugee issues; protecting Jewish students on campus; and enhancing security at Jewish institutions.

The results, published on the CIJA website, also form a long list including protecting Jewish students on campus, strengthening Canada-Israel friendship and "maintaining Canadian pressure on Iran," ensuring a "fair and efficient refugee system," providing affordable access to kosher products and Jewish education, fighting anti-Semitism and protecting human rights (including accountability for "war crimes, genocide, torture and crimes against humanity,"), ensuring adequate security for Jewish community institutions, preventing terrorism, affordable housing, and securing restitution for Holocaust survivors.

Gleaning the difference between the two lists is an exercise in fine detective work, compounded by the fact that CIJA has not specified how these priorities were actually ranked by respondents.

The survey results also do little to clarify respondents' specific policy preferences around these issues. Regarding Israel, for example, there are many unanswered questions. Would respondents prefer that CIJA ask the government to push Israel more vocally on settlements, or should the government to remain silent? Should the Canadian government actively back a two-state solution or remain passive in its approach? Should Canada pair its support for Jewish refugee return with the Palestinian refugee issue or decouple them? Similarly, preventing terrorism could mean supporting controversial legislation such as Bill C-51, or it could mean a variety of other more globally focused policy measures.

Perhaps most importantly, what some may not realize is that CIJA doesn't intend to represent the Jewish community at large. CIJA's core funding comes from the network of federations. And as Shimon Koffler Fogel, CEO of CIJA, told me in an email interview, while CIJA did receive some feedback from outside of the federation system, CIJA does "not claim to represent the totality of Jewish Canada" and instead aims to "advance the public policy interests of the organized Jewish community," which CIJA defines as the "tens of thousands of Jewish Canadians affiliated with their local federation," whether by donation or by volunteering.

The lesson here is that if one wants to have a voice in CIJA's affairs, one should become a federation donor or volunteer. Conversely, if one objects to CIJA's policy approach and feels it's beyond changing, one should keep in mind that providing a donation to federation's annual campaign also entails funding CIJA.

For those who value open dialogue, one should recall that CIJA's record is mixed, but nevertheless shows signs of improvement. On one hand, as I wrote in *Ha'aretz* in 2012, CIJA has at times stymied dialogue, as when the organization advised local Hillel chapters not to meet with noted analyst Peter Beinart on his three-city tour in 2012. On the other hand, last year CIJA hosted a debate between Yoram Hazony and me on the issue of Israel's Jewish nation-state bill, a forum that indeed lent itself to a healthy exchange of ideas around Israeli policy.

CIJA has the right to survey people however it wishes. But this process reminds us that, unlike with our Jewish neighbours to the south, we Canadian Jews – whether affiliated with a federation or not – have an unfortunate dearth of good, solid polling data on specific political attitudes on a range of issues. ■

We must respond to lies

Mordechai Ben-Dat

Odious statements by the world's despots are not new to us. For example, every manner of calumny and mistruth against Israel has been placed on the record at the United Nations. Though false, the remarks are seldom challenged, except by Israel.

There are many reasons for diplomats, politicians and journalists to let monstrous lies pass unchallenged: fear of standing out, geopolitical considerations, the risk of jeopardizing commercial ties,ennui, laziness, ignorance or, at times, shared belief.

But when earnest, civilized individuals and countries fail to challenge deliberate mendacity, deceit merely sinks its roots deeper and deeper into the soil of moral society, poisoning and strangling what is so vital to our way of life: the courage to confront the tyrant.

Two recent examples of inexcusable silence in the face of false, self-serving and repugnant statements illustrate the point, much to our collective shame.

Ever since the P5+1 nations signed the nuclear weapons agreement with Iran, European officials have nearly fallen over each other vying to meet with their Iranian counterparts to secure business with the imminently sanctions-free country. At one such meeting last month in Tehran with the new Hungarian ambassador, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani chose to comment on the influx of Syrian refugees then massing on Hungary's borders.

"We are happy that some European countries made positive efforts to help refugees, and we hope other European countries that do not have this position compensate on shortcomings," Rouhani said. The latter part of the statement was a transparent criticism of the government of Hungary for its equivocal policies toward the fleeing Syrians.

We can only imagine how the Hungarian envoy felt as he stood in the ornately decorated room, not responding to the offensively condescending disparagement aimed at him by Rouhani. For the envoy knew the truth that everyone else knows about the Syrian refugees: it is Iranian military and Iranian surrogates – Hezbollah – along with Assad's loyalists, who have directly caused the displacement of some 11 million Syrians and more than four million of them to flee the country. Apart from the Syrian strongman himself, Iran more than any other nation on earth is responsible for the plight of the unfortunate Syrians. Iran arms, protects, props up and directs Syrian President Bashar Assad. Most experts and observers long ago concluded that Assad would have long ago been defeated, or would have long ago fled, but for the intervention of Iran on his side.

As Charles Krauthammer noted, "most of the refugees are not fleeing the Islamic State. Its depravity is more ostentatious, but it is mostly visited upon minorities, Christian and Yazidi – and they have already been largely ethnically cleansed from Islamic State territory. The European detention camps are overflowing with Syrians fleeing Assad's barbarism, especially his attacks on civilians, using artillery, chlorine gas and nail-filled barrel bombs."

Iran underwrites "Assad's barbarism." Assad openly acknowledges and pays tribute to the Iranian rulers for their assistance to him. Without Iran's brutality and duplicity, it is safe to say, there would not be the Syrian refugee crisis that there is today. Yet Rouhani felt no personal compunction in chiding the Hungarian government's response to the current refugee situation.

Nor did the Syrian tyrant, Assad, look embarrassed when he told Russian journalists a few weeks ago that the West was responsible for creating the refugee crisis. This was caused, he claimed, by the West's support for "terrorists." Wrapping himself metaphorically in the shredded flag of Syrian democracy, he insisted that he would not step down from the government. He actually claimed the support of the Syrian people. No western journalist or government official rebuked Assad for his exculpatory fantasy.

The Iran-Assad alliance has wrought murder and misery to the Syrian people. This is the simple, painful truth that no outrageous and misleading statements can obscure. ■

The five per cent day school tuition solution

Rabbi Jay Kelman

With the busy Yom Tov season, I wouldn't be surprised if many missed what is potentially the most significant Jewish news story of the year. I'm referring to the announcement that four Jewish day schools in New Jersey will be capping tuition fees at a maximum of 18 per cent of income, regardless of the number of children in a family.

This new program, which is in addition to any tuition breaks already in place for lower-income families, is aimed at middle-class families – those earning between $150,000 and $325,000, an income level many can only dream of, yet doesn't allow many to pay the crippling costs of tuition. This initiative is being made possible by a gift from the Gottesman Family Foundation. Even better, each of the four schools involved have enhanced the program by capping tuition at even lower rates for those earning "only" in the $250,000 range.

This initiative will first and foremost lower the burden for those who desire the basic right to give their children a Jewish education. The enormous cost of day school education not only prevents many from attending, it has caused many Jewish babies not to be born. While there is little statistical information available, it's well known among middle-income families that day school tuition is the best form of birth control.

In addition, this marks an important shift in thinking about funding Jewish education. Sadly, too many feel the cost should be borne by those who use the system. This isn't how the public system is funded, nor should it be how Jewish education is funded. As Paula Gottesman stated, "Just as people pay taxes for public schools – and no one would say we shouldn't do that – the Jewish community should tax itself for the education of our children. Our collective future should be the responsibility of the collective community."

What is good for New Jersey is good for Canada, and especially Toronto. Not only does Toronto have the largest Jewish community in Canada, but in four other provinces, the government funds much of the Jewish day schools' general education program, resulting in much lower, albeit still much too high, tuition. This may go a long way toward explaining why in Toronto, 32 per cent of Jewish children attend Jewish day schools, compared to almost 60 per cent in Montreal. While a similar program was launched at Toronto's Robbins Hebrew Academy capping tuition at 15 per cent of income, it was limited to those with three children at RHA and didn't include high school, making its practical impact extremely limited.

I'd like to propose a variation of the New Jersey model, though I'd be thrilled if that model were adopted here. Let's cap tuition at five per cent of income, regardless of the number of children per family. At the same time, families who benefit would be asked to purchase a $1-million life insurance policy. Over time, thousands of policies would yield billions of dollars. At the same time, I call upon everyone in the community – whether or not you have, or had, children in the day school system – to commit to contributing via insurance or one of many other methods to help support this much-needed initiative.

To get this program started, I urge leading philanthropists to provide bridge financing – either by grant or by way of a loan – to allow the program time to become self-sufficient. The enormous wealth in our community makes this very doable.

Change can only come from public pressure, so whether you're a day school parent willing to purchase a life insurance policy in exchange for greatly reduced tuition or a concerned community member who cares about Jewish education and want to contribute, please email me at rabbijay@torahinmotion.org. I look forward to receiving at least 1,000 emails in the coming days, to ensure that real and permanent changes are in the offing. ■

Cultural differences can strengthen us

Norma Baumel Joseph

Names identify us. They do so for both the individual and the group. We are called Jews – it's an immediately known particularity. It enables others to locate us on a spectrum with which they are familiar. Equally, it enables us to communicate with each other.

However, that one word belies our distinctions and specific characteristics. It also creates a set of assumptions on the part of both insiders and outsiders of unity – or worse – uniformity.

We are not one, fundraising slogans to the contrary. Our differences are important keys to group identities, culture and history. They should not be erased. Diversity signals dynamism of community and a wealth of tradition.

Some of us are known through our denominational affiliation. Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Orthodox – these names designate certain ritual practice and synagogue affiliations. They also indicate a decidedly North American context. They do not necessarily operate in Europe or even in Israel as identifiers. Other nomenclatures locate geographical or national associations such as American Jew or Italian Jew. Some are called Ashkenazi or Sephardi Jews. Some are associated with distinct chassidic sects. The Jew part is not all-encompassing, correspondingly applicable: it does not equalize us.

In ancient Israel, we were known as the Israelites. This signified a tribal or familial location. The children of Israel were literally supposed to be Jacob's descendants. But many outsiders attached themselves to the community and there were significant internal divisions.

Each part of a name locates a group and sources its cultural patterns. Paying attention to these discrete classifications enables healthier interactions and effective communication.

Iraqi Jews came to Canada in 1951 and knew themselves to be Arab Jews. But when they got to North America or Israel, they were quickly informed that one could not be an Arab and a Jew. For people from the Middle East, the operating distinction was Muslim, Christian or Jew. The basic category Arab referred to the shared cultural context and spoken language of the varying communities. They surely knew they were not all the same; differences were clear. But the Jews, who lived in these countries and had lived there for over 2,000 years, shared all the cultural elements of Arab life. They ate the same foods, negotiated life in the same fashion and lived fully accepting their place in this multiplicity. They did not speak Yiddish nor eat gefilte fish. And they still don't.

> *We are not one, fundraising slogans to the contrary*

Their ruptured and dislocated recent history uprooted their sense of self and identities were torn asunder. In accepting the western style of thinking that everything is a binary of conflict, of Arab versus Jew, we have added to their disarticulation.

We should not ask people to dissolve their identities in order to facilitate neat borders or clear groupings. We should learn more about the shared cultural conditions that led to such identifications.

To be an Arab Jew does not indicate a clash of civilizations. Rather, becoming aware of the ethnic and religious diversity of the Middle East might open up our horizons and prevent stereotyping that is detrimental to interrelationships. We rid ourselves of this constant oppositional state of mind. It is not always a matter of us versus them. Sometimes "us" lived amongst "them" and the coexistence created a flourishing civilization.

Maybe the world needs to learn that competing binaries are not the only pattern available. We can think in multiple forms and share cultural complexities. Most importantly, we must recognize the wealth of the Middle Eastern Jewish world, its cultural richness and significant contributions. Iraqi Jews were indigenous to the country and they contributed to the life, history, economy, arts and theatre of their country. They were Arab Jews. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 1, 2015

MP calls graffiti slamming Harper 'anti-Semitic'

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Graffiti that suggests a vote for Prime Minister Stephen Harper is a vote for Nazism was discovered Sept. 21 in front of a Bathurst Manor home.

The messages spray-painted on the road in front of 178 Codsell Ave., said, "Stop Harper," "Death = Harper," as well as an image of a swastika beside the symbol and word "= Harper."

Mark Adler, the Conservative candidate for York Centre – the riding that encompasses the Bathurst Manor neighbourhood, which is home to many Jews, including many Holocaust survivors – released a statement following the discovery of the graffiti that condemned it as anti-Semitic.

"I am deeply disturbed by the appalling anti-Semitic graffiti in the Bathurst Manor area, which trivializes the Holocaust, denigrates the memory of Holocaust victims, and is highly offensive to the ethnically and religiously diverse members of the Conservative party," Adler said.

"Moreover, the timing of this odious graffiti is deplorable as Jews across Canada prepare for Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement and holiest day in the Jewish calendar, during which time Jews strive for personal peace that will help make the world a better place for all."

> *The timing of this odious graffiti is deplorable as Jews across Canada prepare for Yom Kippur*

Sara Lefton, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' vice-president for the Greater Toronto Area, also condemned the graffiti.

"Nazi analogies are inappropriate, offensive, and disrespectful to all Canadians, particularly Holocaust victims, survivors and their families. Graffiti like this has no place in the Canadian political process and should be condemned by all Canadians," Lefton said.

When contacted by *The CJN*, Adler's campaign manager declined to comment further, referring back to the statement. ■

These spray-painted messages were found Sept. 21 in Bathurst Manor

CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK

Gaffes and 'anti-Semitism' on the campaign trail

Daniel Wolgelerenter

In the Sept. 17 *Globe and Mail* leaders' debate, Prime Minister Stephen Harper made reference to "old-stock Canadians" in defending his government's policy on health care for refugees and immigrants, saying it had only denied care to bogus claimants.

"We do not offer them a better health-care plan than the ordinary Canadian can receive," Harper said. "I think that's something that both new and existing and old-stock Canadians can agree with."

Critics pounced, calling it either a lapse that showed Harper's true racist colours or a deliberate, coded dog whistle to his intolerant party core.

But if you watched the debate, it was clear Harper was searching for a way to express how both new and old Canadians might agree with his policy. By the next day, he clarified that the phrase referred to "Canadians who have been the descendants of immigrants for one or more generations."

Under that definition, with four European-born grandparents, I and many other Jews qualify. As such, *Walrus* editor Jonathan Kay was right to say the comment was no big deal.

"Yes, 'old-stock' is a fusty phrase, offensive to some. But it's idiotic the way the media is acting like Harper used the n-word or something," Kay tweeted Sept. 20. "In fact: is there an example of a right-wing [political] party, in any country, so decisively opening itself up to immigrant groups as Harper's?"

At worst, the prime minister was guilty of using an inelegant expression that's more prevalent in nationalist discourse – similar phrases are common in Quebec – than everyday political parlance.

Speaking of criticizing Harper, on Sept. 21, York Centre MP Mark Adler issued a statement decrying "anti-Semitic" graffiti spray-painted on a street in a Jewish area of his Toronto riding. They were: "Stop Harrper" (sic), "Death = Harper," and an image of a swastika beside the words "= Harper."

"I am deeply disturbed by the appalling anti-Semitic graffiti in the Bathurst Manor area, which trivializes the Holocaust, denigrates the memory of Holocaust victims, and is highly offensive to the ethnically and religiously diverse members of the Conservative party," wrote Adler, who is, famously, the son of a Shoah survivor.

"Moreover, the timing of this odious graffiti is deplorable as Jews across Canada prepare for Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement and holiest day in the Jewish calendar."

Anti-Semitic graffiti in a Jewish neighbourhood is indeed reprehensible, especially when it appears around an important Jewish holiday. The only problem is that the crude scrawlings were more anti-Harper than anti-Jewish.

Harper has been a vocal supporter of Israel and a friend to Jews for reasons that seem to transcend electoral considerations, but he's not actually Jewish. So while using swastikas in political debate is rhetorically juvenile – unless you're criticizing actual Nazis, and Harper isn't one at all – it's not anti-Semitic to make the comparison. It's just dumb.

Finally, over Yom Kippur came news that Alex Johnstone, the NDP candidate in Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas – and, disturbingly, current vice-chair of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board – apologized for making a penis joke about Auschwitz on a friend's Facebook page in 2008. She then admitted that up until the controversy erupted, she didn't know what Auschwitz was.

"Ahhh, the infamous Pollish [sic], phallic, hydro posts… of course you took pictures of this! It expresses… how the curve is normal, natural and healthy right!" she wrote about a picture of curved electrified fence posts around the death camp in a comment unearthed by a satirical website.

Johnstone, who is in her early 30s, seemed sincere when she told the *Hamilton Spectator* there was "no malice intended" in the remark. The bigger issue, however, is that although she said she'd "heard about concentration camps," it's disconcerting that a school trustee who wants to be an MP was ignorant about the most notorious killing ground in human history.

In 2011, Johnstone tweeted that it was "great to hear" Peel students were learning about the Holocaust, and in 2013, she tweeted about a Hamilton teacher who won an award for Holocaust education.

Perhaps she should do more than just tweet about the Shoah. ■

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Tories condemn anti-Israel posters around Montreal

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Political posters around Montreal depicting a dead child on a beach and accusing Israel of killing Palestinian children and Prime Minister Stephen Harper of supporting it are causing outrage.

Over a photo of the lifeless child, the signs read in French: "Israel murders Palestinian children/ Harper applauds/ What do the other parties say?"

In small print are the names of four Palestinian boys who died in July 2014 while playing soccer on a beach allegedly killed by an Israeli air strike on the port of Gaza. It alleges that Israel closed a criminal investigation and no one has been found guilty.

The sponsor of the posters is identified as BDS Québec, paid and authorized by the Coalition pour la Justice et la Paix en Palestine.

The Conservative party issued a statement on Sept. 20 condemning the posters. "The Conservative Party of Canada is deeply disturbed by the anti-Israel boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) signs posted in the Montreal area. We strongly condemn these signs as further evidence of continued, deplorable efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel.

A poster is put up near Westmount Square.

"As we have said before, Canada will stand with Israel through fire and water… We will oppose any tactic to undermine Israel's legitimacy, economic viability, or right to defend herself in the face of terror."

Megan Murdoch, a spokesperson for the party, sent *The CJN* some photos of the posters. Two of them are on the same pole as New Democratic Party (NDP) candidates: Allison Turner in the riding of Ville Marie-Le Sud Ouest-Ile des Soeurs, outside Concordia University's downtown campus, and James Hughes of Notre Dame de Grâce-Westmount, near Westmount Square, where the Israeli Consulate is located.

NDP press secretary Mélanie Richer said the posters "have no association with any of the NDP candidates, nor have [they] anything to do with the NDP."

Murdoch said that there were also at least two posters near McGill University on Sherbrooke Street, another near de Maisonneuve Boulevard and Greene Avenue, and one outside the Adonis grocery store on Ste. Catherine Street. BDS activists have held earlier protests at that store because it sells Israeli hummus.

Mount Royal Conservative candidate Robert Libman said the posters have been posted in that riding as well. Calling them "revolting," he stated, "I strongly oppose the BDS movement."

According to information on its website, BDS Québec is supported by 27 groups, including such major unions as the Centrale des syndicats du Québec and the Fédération nationale des enseignantes et des enseignants, the Fédération des femmes du Québec, the student union Association syndicale pour une solidarité étudiante (ASSE), Independent Jewish Voices, and the political party Québec solidaire.

"We are absolutely disgusted by these signs," said Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs spokesperson Eta Yudin on Sept. 24. "When we learned about them we immediately contacted both the City of Montreal and Elections Canada to see if they violate municipal bylaws or the Elections Canada Act. While they do not appear to contravene municipal bylaws, Elections Canada is still assessing and we are waiting for a final response. We have also reached out to the federal political parties, each of which are on record opposing and condemning BDS."

Also on Sept. 24, former Liberal foreign affairs critic Marc Garneau, who is seeking re-election in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, tweeted: "This kind of divisive and hateful rhetoric has no place in Canada and no place in this campaign."

The Israeli Consulate General in Montreal stated that it is "appalled by the abuse of the Canadian election campaign to disseminate hateful slander about Israel. Support for Israel's right to exist and the defence of our civilian population against brutal terrorist attacks is the consensus in Canada and is certainly not a campaign issue." ■

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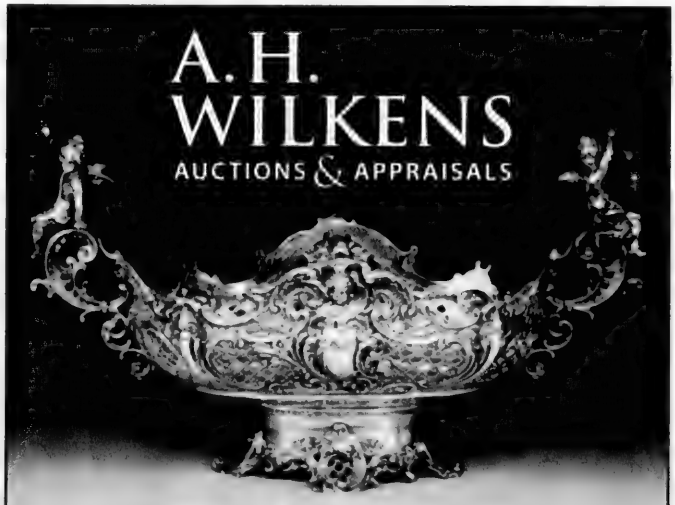

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Ex-foreign minister Baird campaigns for Tory hopeful

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Former foreign affairs minister John Baird had encouraging words for Mount Royal Conservative candidate Robert Libman, who according to one poll is trailing Liberal opponent Anthony Housefather.

In his first run for political office 20 years ago, Baird said he was in third place with just 3-1/2 weeks left in the campaign. But with a final push, he won his Ottawa-area provincial seat.

Baird, who resigned from cabinet in February and from Parliament the following month, spoke at a Sept. 24 campaign event for Libman at Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aaron coincidentally on the same day as a Mainstreet/Postmedia poll showed Libman 15 points behind Housefather, who had 39 per cent support.

"This riding can be won," said Baird.

Libman and his campaign organizers dismissed the poll as unreliable because the head of Mainstreet is a former president of the Liberal Party of Ontario.

Libman conceded the Mount Royal race is "very close" but said he viewed that poll result with skepticism.

"Our numbers are quite different," he said. "I know if we get out the vote, we will win." Mount Royal has been Liberal for 75 years.

Baird, 47, said he has admired Libman for his strong principles and courage to act on them since he co-founded and led the English-rights Equality Party to four seats in the National Assembly in 1989.

"[Prime Minister] Stephen Harper needs Robert Libman beside him at the cabinet table," Baird said. "Not only will he be a forceful voice for Mount Royal, but for all of the Montreal area."

None of the five Quebec seats the Conservatives held in the last Parliament are in the Montreal area.

About 175 people attended the public event at the Côte St. Luc synagogue. The congregation's Rabbi Reuben Poupko said his introduction should not be interpreted as an endorsement of Libman, as he believes he should not officially support any candidate.

However, he said Libman has been a good friend for some 30 years, and he praised his honesty and decency. "He does what is right when no one is around [...and] is deserving of all our support," he said.

Rabbi Poupko also said that Harper and Baird "deserve our gratitude. John Baird

Mount Royal Tory candidate Robert Libman, left, with John Baird JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

was the foreign minister of the Canadian government that has been most supportive of Israel ever. That's a fact that can't be denied, argued or debated."

Libman went even further and said no other government leader of any country has been as supportive of Israel since its creation.

Baird, who now works in the private sector, was praised for upholding the same moral convictions as Harper. He was particularly applauded by Libman for severing diplomatic relations with Iran in 2012 for its support of the Syria's Assad regime and Hezbollah and Hamas, and its vows to destroy Israel.

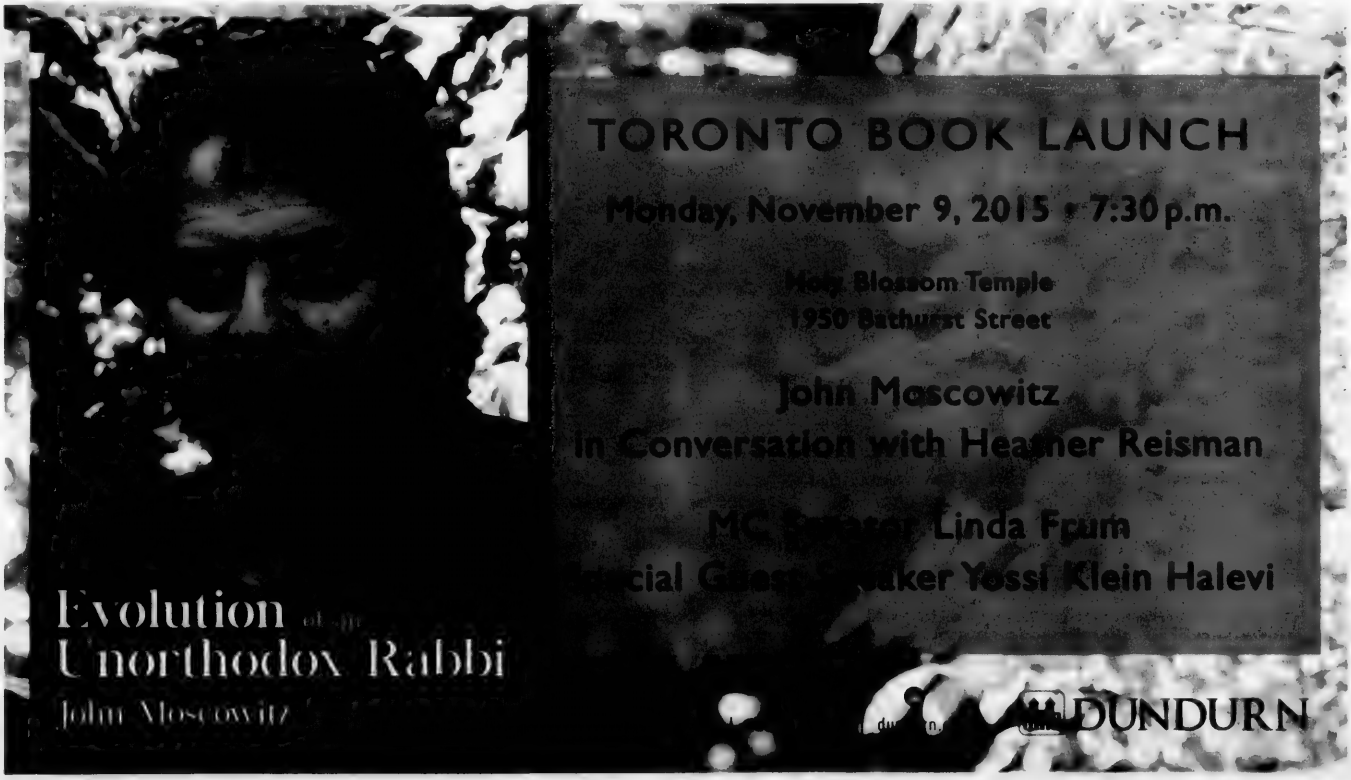
"The great struggle of our generation is the threat of international terrorism," Baird said, and "the Jewish People are far too often on the front line of that struggle." Canada must be unequivocal in confronting terrorism, he said, in much the same way earlier generations fought in the two world wars.

To those who say Canada has become too favourable to Israel and is no longer an "honest broker" in the Middle East, Baird said, "You're bloody right we're not. We have returned to what was our policy for many decades... We should not try to be a referee."

Canada, he said, enjoys greater respect in the Arab world today than it did 10 years ago, especially for its firm stance against Iran and in fighting ISIS.

Baird earlier attended a private fundraiser for Libman at a local car dealership. Among those present were three rabbis: Yonah Rosner of Congregation Shomrim Laboker, Asher Jacobson of Congregation Chevra Kadisha-B'nai Jacob, and Saul Emanuel, executive director of the Vaad Ha'ir.

Also that evening, Stephen Bronfman was at Housefather's campaign office to formally endorse his candidacy. Bronfman is on the national board of the Liberal party and is its chief revenue officer and was general chair of last year's Combined Jewish Appeal campaign in Montreal. ■



Comments on Jewish issues dog NDPers

SHERI SHEFA
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Two NDP hopefuls found themselves in hot water last week after old social media comments surfaced that critics said exposed the candidates' ignorance of Jewish issues.

Stefan Jonasson, who was running in Winnipeg's Charleswood–St. James–Assiniboia–Headingley riding, reluctantly resigned Sept. 24 after the *True North Times*, a satirical website that promised to expose controversial comments by nine politicians in nine days, dug up a three-year-old Facebook post in which he accused haredi Jews of offering "a toxic caricature of faith at odds with the spirit of the religious tradition they profess to represent." He added that they mistreat women and compared them to the Taliban and other extremists.

Following his resignation, Jonasson posted a message on Facebook that criticized *True North Times* and defended his post on haredim.

"A model of gutter journalism, this blog ridiculed some of my past social media posts and sought to create the false impression that I had offered a general indictment of Jewish people when, in fact, I was criticizing the misogynistic behaviour of a particular group of dogmatic believers," he wrote.

"I stand by my criticism of those who oppress women in the name of religion, and I'm disappointed that my party chooses not to stand with me."

NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair issued a brief comment about Jonasson's resignation, saying that Jonasson "clearly recognized that he had said something totally inappropriate and has withdrawn, and that's enough."

Earlier in the week, *True North Times* revealed that Alex Johnstone, the NDP candidate for Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, made a penis joke in 2008 in a comment about a friend's Facebook picture, taken at the Auschwitz concentration camp museum, that featured an electric fence and its curved concrete supports.

"Ahhh, the infamous Pollish [sic], phallic, hydro posts," her comment read. "Of course you took pictures of this! It expresses how the curve is normal, natural, and healthy right!"

In an interview with the *Hamilton Spectator*, Johnstone, who is a Hamilton school trustee and vice chair of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, claimed ignorance. "Well, I didn't know what Auschwitz was, or I didn't up until today," she said.

Johnstone has apologized for the post, saying, "While never intending any malice, this comment was clearly inappropriate. I would like to offer my unreserved apology."

She also reached out to Jewish groups, including B'nai Brith Canada.

Michael Mosytn, B'nai Brith's CEO, said when he spoke with her, she said "she was deeply troubled by the unwanted media attention and did not feel that public characterizations accurately reflected who she is as an individual… She committed, win or lose, to work with our B'nai Brith experts to further her personal knowledge of the Holocaust."

Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, said his organization has yet to be approached by Johnstone, but he invited her to take part in an educational trip for Canadian leaders to Auschwitz this month.

"It made sense for me to invite her and give her the opportunity to learn about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. She has not responded," he said.

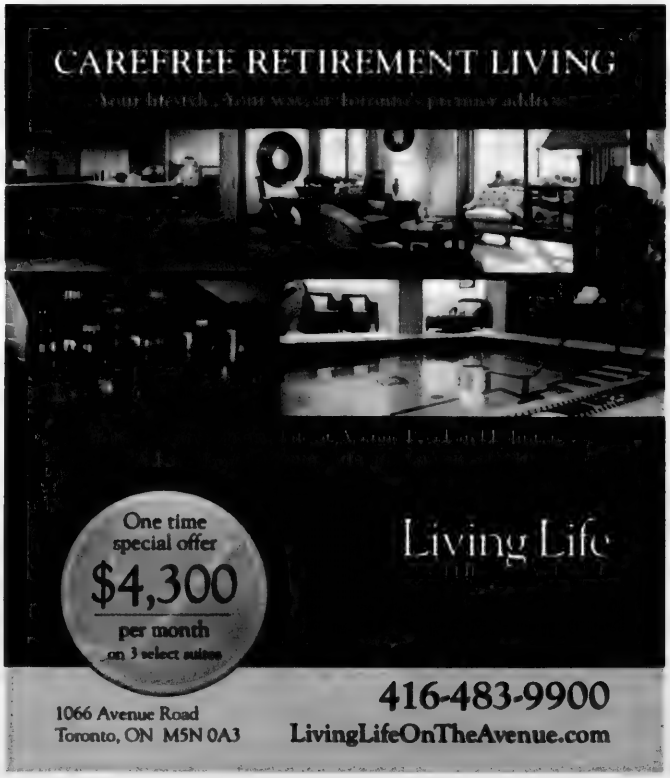
Regarding Jonasson's remarks about haredim and the Taliban, Benlolo said they were "horrific."

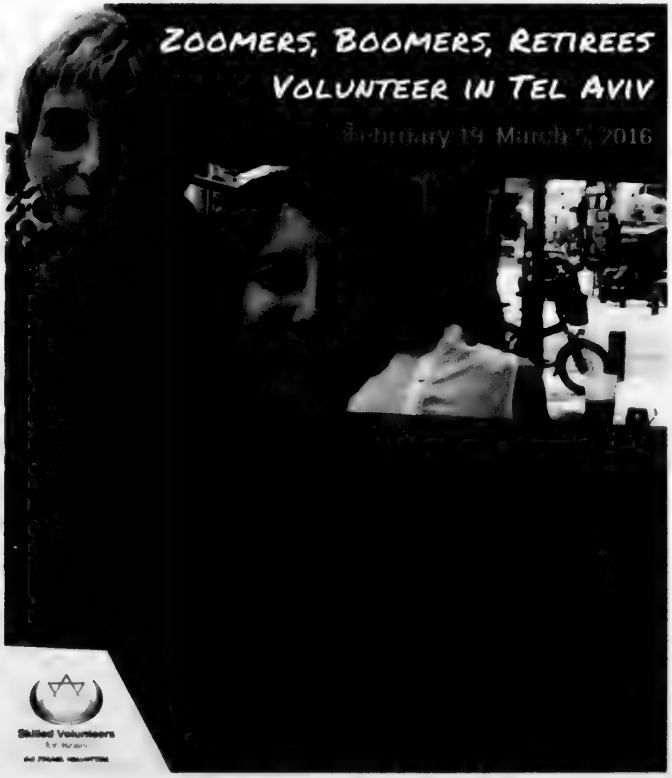
"Clearly, he doesn't understand the Taliban and the haredim, and the differences between the two groups. The Taliban is notorious for killing people in soccer stadiums and shooting women in the head. Comparing the Taliban to religious Jews is wrong and very disturbing, and shows he is quite ignorant."

Alex Johnstone

Mostyn said Jonasson's comments are offensive and factually incorrect. "The fact he even believes that haredi Jews are one homogenous group shows his absolute ignorance of the Jewish world… We applaud the NDP for pulling Mr. Jonasson's candidacy for these offensive views."

Benlolo chose not to reflect on whether Jonasson's resignation was necessary. "It's not my position to dictate whether political candidates should resign. I think people have to do the right thing, and the parties themselves have to decide who they want to have inside their parties as reflective of themselves." ■





Court dismisses defamation suit by CUPW

PAUL LUNGEN
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An Ontario court has dismissed a suit in which the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) alleged it was defamed by comments carried in a Sun TV broadcast and later in a *Toronto Sun* newspaper column, which suggested the labour group supported terrorism.

The Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled in mid-summer that CUPW failed to give proper notice to the defendants, which included Sun Media Corporation, TVA Group, Quebecor Media, media personality Jerry Agar and Avi Benlolo, CEO of Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies.

The court was ruling on a motion to dismiss the CUPW suit on the basis of lack of notice and because CUPW, as an un-incorporated entity, did not have the legal capacity to sue for libel.

Recounting the facts of the case, Judge Robert Pelletier noted that while CUPW did serve notice on the defendants, the notice was not specific enough to inform them about the particular comments that formed the subject of the suit.

Avi Benlolo

Jerry Agar

"I would conclude, therefore, that while the notices identified the matter complained of, they did not sufficiently specify the matter complained of, as was clearly possible... The notices provided were more in the nature of the plaintiff's interpretation of the words spoken and published than they were direct references to them."

The court also found that the issue of whether an unincorporated association can sue for defamation is specific to each case and is "an unsettled and burgeoning area of the law."

The case arose out of a July 24, 2014, television broadcast by the now defunct Sun television news network, operated by Sun News, and a July 28 article in the *Toronto Sun*. The TV segment was hosted by Agar and included an interview with Benlolo about a pro-Palestinian rally on Parliament Hill.

The July 24 TV segment was called Hamas, CUPW Flags Fly on Parliament Hill. The broadcast noted that CUPW banners were flown near Hamas flags and stated that Hamas is a designated terrorist organization in Canada.

CUPW alleged that the column written by Agar in the *Toronto Sun*, with the headline, "Hamas goes postal? Only in Canada," contained "many false, disparaging and defamatory statements about CUPW and its members."

Subsequently, the court noted, Sun News issued retractions and apologies, as did the *Toronto Sun*.

The retractions stated, "We regret and withdraw any suggestion that CUPW, or its members, are terrorist sympathizers or supporters of Hamas."

Benlolo's office declined to comment about the case.

In a response to a *CJN* inquiry, Agar stated, "I believe CUPW is appealing the decision."

Inquiries to Quebecor, and CUPW were not returned by *The CJN*'s deadline. ■

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From the View of a Recovered Problem Gambler
Rabbi Grover will interview Jason, a recovered problem gambler and proprietor of Responsible Gambling Services. Professional background in the gaming industry, from table games dealer to management, Jason will discuss his time as a Problem Gambler and his journey into recovery.

October 20
Sara Waxman
How Did I Get From There to Here?
Award-winning restaurant critic and food/travel writer for the past 30 years and publishing in books, newspapers and magazines, Sara Waxman is currently the Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of DINE magazine. Sara has always lived by the motto that you should make the most of what you have, no matter how insignificant it seems at the time.

October 27
Dan Yashinsky
Importance of Oral Storytelling inFamily and Healthcare Settings
Story-teller, author and community organizer, Dan received the first Jane Jacobs Prize honouring his contributions to enhance Toronto's cultural life. Since February 2014, Dan has worked as the first anist-in-residence at a centre for geriatric care.

November 3
Dr. Doris Bergen
Liberation: Aftermath and Rebirth
Chair of Holocaust Studies at the University of Toronto and author of numerous articles on religion, ethnicity and gender in WWII, Dr. Bergen will talk about this year's Holocaust Education week theme.

November 10
Marc Jordan
Talking Through Pictures: My Life in Song Writing
Multiple (including Juno) award-winning songwriter, producer and singer Marc Jordan has spent four decades writing for major artists like Josh Groban, Diana Ross, Bette Midler, Cher and most famously,"Rhythm of My Heart" for Rod Stewart. Only now is he speaking publicly about his life-long struggle with dyslexia. In conversation with Rabbi Grover, Marc will tell us about his life in songwriting.

November 17
Jonathan Halevi
How the Islamic State (ISIL) Threatens Canada and the West
Senior researcher of the Middle East and radical Islam at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Lt. Col. (ret.) Halevi is a co-founder of the Orient Research Group Ltd. and a former advisor to the Policy Planning Division of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

November 24
Sara Diamond
Jewish Reflections in Visual Art: Practice and Impact
President of OCAD University, with a PhD and Masters degrees from the UK, Sara will discuss some outstanding current contemporary Jewish visual artists and the ways that Jews have contributed to building a strong visual art community in Toronto.

December 1
Prof. Robert Kenedy
A Vanishing Diaspora? Considering the Future of Jews in France and Europe
Associate Professor in Sociology at York U., Prof. Kenedy has been studying ethnic identity since 1989. In researching the French Jewish Diaspora since 2005, Prof. Kenedy is completing a book about their experiences with the new anti-Semitism and reasons for leaving France.

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FEDTalks kick off Vancouver's annual campaign

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

More than 700 members of Vancouver's Jewish community showed up for the annual campaign kickoff of the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver (JFGV) Sept. 17.

The event, titled FEDtalks, featured short, TED-style talks from four speakers: retiring Mount Royal MP Irwin Cotler, Challah for Hunger founder Eli Winkelman, Appleseeds Academy CEO Dafna Lifshitz and well-known Los Angeles rabbi David Wolpe.

The speakers touched on the refugee and migrant crisis, caring for the hungry, helping those on the periphery of Israel and Jewish identity and values.

"Their messages are our messages, and they reflected the soul of who we are as a federation," said Ezra Shanken, federation CEO.

Cotler, a law professor, human rights lawyer and former justice minister, placed particular emphasis on the civil war in Syria, the refugee and migrant crisis it's caused and how the world can help.

"Behind every statistic is a human being. Behind every statistic is another Alan Kurdi," he said, referring to the toddler whose lifeless body made newspaper front pages around the world after he drowned in the Mediterranean as his family tried to reach safety. "While atrocities were unfolding in Syria, the international community was behaving as a bystander. The world dithered while Syrians died."

He also discussed the recent Iran nuclear deal and the Canadian Parliament's conclusions four years ago.

"Our foreign affairs subcommittee in the Canadian Parliament unanimously concluded that Iran had already committed the crime of incitement to genocide prohibited under the genocide convention. Yet as we meet, not one state in the international community has undertaken its obligations... to hold Iran to account for its state-sanctioned incitement to hate and to genocide."

Eli Winkelman, founder of Challah for Hunger, shared her story of turning the simple act of baking challah into an initiative for social justice.

"Having just returned from Israel, I started baking challah in my dorm kitchen," she recalled of the organization's beginnings at Scripps College in Claremont, Calif., in 2004. "Within a month we had a good handful of regular bakers coming back week after week and complaining that their friends were eating all their challah."

Dafna Lifshitz

Eventually she and her student friends were baking 50 to 100 challahs a week, selling them in a campus courtyard and donating the money. Today, on that same campus, they're selling up to 300 loaves a week, and Winkelman's organization has 90 chapters on university campuses in three countries.

She challenged the audience to think about the complexities of improving the world while living in it. "What do you value? How do your actions show what you value? How does your money and the way you spend it in the world help create a world that shares your values?" she asked.

Dafna Lifshitz, CEO of Appleseeds Academy, discussed how her organization tries to bridge the digital divide in Israel.

"There are 1,300 hundred start-ups in Tel Aviv. Nothing in Kiryat Shmona in the north. Nothing in Eilat in the south. What you see is not a start-up nation, it is a start-up metropolis," she told the crowd. "I believe Israel should be a start-up nation for all."

She highlighted three programs that are making a difference, including Net@, which delivers computer training, including certification from Cisco Systems, to at-risk youth in the Northern Galilee. This helps them get placement in elite IDF units, which in turn leads to highly-skilled well-paying civilian jobs, thus helping break the cycle of poverty one teen and one family at a time. The program is supported by the JFGV, whose partnership region is the Upper Galilee.

Rabbi Wolpe, spiritual leader of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, referenced the refugee and migrant crisis with specific emphasis on the Jewish tradition of caring for those in need and on the power of collective giving.

"When we see tragedy and difficulty it mobilizes our energy like nothing else – and this is as old as Judaism," he said. "Sometimes, through the federation, you change the lives of people you don't know, and you change them forever." ■

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Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish, Director of the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel

Kadi Dr. Iyad Zahalka, Judge of the Jerusalem Muslim Sharia Court of the State of Israel

Presented by Beth Tzedec Congregation, Canadian Friends of Hebrew University, Multi-Faith Centre for Spiritual Study and Practice, and the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies

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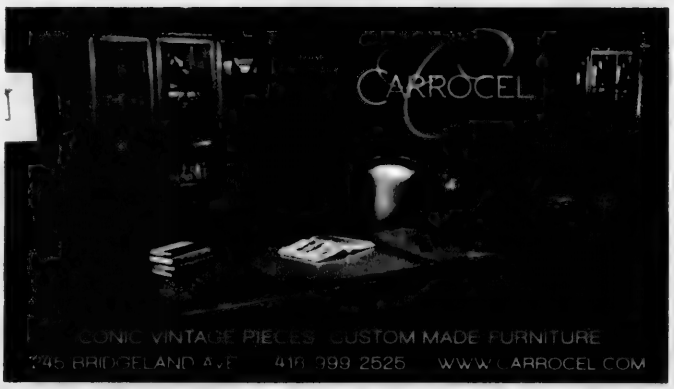


Family uses basketball to raise funds for Bat Yam youth

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A month before his Sept. 26 bar mitzvah, Mitchell Rodney went to Bat Yam, Israel, to perform a pre-simchah mitzvah of his own.

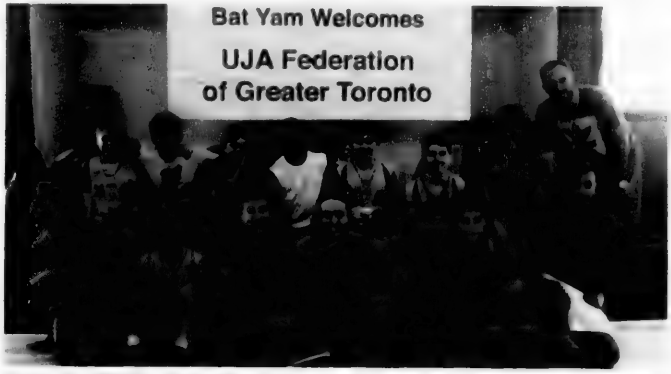
Travelling with his family, the 13-year-old Thornhill native met the players of Maccabi Bat Yam's youth basketball team. Several players on the team are Ethiopian immigrants who live below the poverty line.

Many of those young players also rely on a $3,600 donation from Hoops Kids, the Toronto fundraiser that Mitchell and his family organize, to subsidize their gym fees.

"I wanted to know where the funds were going and I wanted to see, first-hand, the people and how [the money] has impacted their lives," Mitchell said.

Mitchell's older sister, Hallie, established Hoops Kids in 2011 as part of her bat mitzvah project. The fundraiser was a youth-oriented alternative to Hoops 4 Israel, a three-on-three basketball tournament for older teens and adults.

Since 2011, the Hoops Kids tournament has attracted more kids and donations. Mitchell took over as leader of Hoops Kids earlier this year. Funds raised help to buy bags, jerseys and other team necessities.



Mitchell Rodney, front row, third from left, and sisters Hallie, front row centre, and Layla, third from right, with the Maccabi Bat Yam basketball team

Children in Bat Yam often practise for up to 12 hours each week, often in high temperatures and gyms without air conditioning.

"They were very good basketball players," Mitchell told *The CJN*. "They were ranked 10th in Israel for their age group."

In 2007, Bat Yam, a Tel Aviv suburb, became a partner with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, with a focus on helping at-risk citizens. Laura Kindler, a federation representative in Bat Yam, said fundraising efforts by Canadian Jews to help those hovering around the poverty line are important.

"They appreciate it," Kindler said of the children from Bat Yam who receive these subsidies. "They know how the person who gave the gift lives so far away. How touched they are that somebody from Toronto... cares about them and thinks about them."

Since the partnership began eight years ago, Kindler said the area's Ethiopian immigrant population, whose members are aided by the Canadian fundraising efforts, has grown by nearly 300 families. Nevertheless, more than two-thirds of Ethiopian immigrants in Bat Yam live below the poverty line.

The Rodney family hopes they can keep contributing to the same sports-driven kids in Bat Yam, although future plans for Hoops Kids are still up for discussion. If it continues, corporate sponsorship could be a big help to boosting the fundraiser, said Jordan Rodney, Mitchell's dad.

Mitchell's mom, Julie, said getting children involved in charity events ensures they're not insular. "Jordan and I would say to [our kids], 'Sometimes you have to do things for other people and put what you want aside, and carve out time to give back,'" she said. "Hopefully, it keeps them a little less selfish and a little more giving."

She urged kids to sign up for federation's B'nai Tzedek bar and bat mitzvah program, which lets children set up an endowment fund and learn about philanthropy.

"Looking at these [Bat Yam] kids, I realized how fortunate I am," Mitchell said. "I've known my whole life that charity is wonderful. You have to give back. It's nice to give back to society." ■

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Martin Rochwerg - Partner at Miller Thomson. Martin provides advice to family businesses on tax planning, estate planning, succession planning and dispute resolution. He also practises in the firm's tax group, and is editor-in-chief of Personal Tax and Estate Planning.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 1, 2015

Seeking better mental health? Take this test

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Like a puzzle whose pieces continue to be assembled to reveal a larger picture, the brain divulges more and more of its secrets over time. Back when he was in medical school, the mind-body connection was not as well understood as it is today, said 66-year-old Dr. Sam Ozersky.

Today we know that mental illnesses, such as bipolar disorder, depression, schizophrenia and post-traumatic stress disorder can affect the physiology of the brain, in some cases shrinking its volume, as revealed in MRI scans. But it's also been learned that early treatment can help reverse that effect.

"The brain can recover," said Ozersky, a psychiatrist and senior consultant in mood disorders at the University Health Network (UHN). "The brain can heal itself within limits either through medication or certain forms of brain activity such as psychotherapy, physical exercise and brain exercise such as puzzles, Sudoko and crosswords.

"Yes, you can renovate your brain, provided it is not a 'tear down' situation and renovation is not extensive," he said.

The key is early intervention and that's where "Feeling Better Now" (FBN) comes in.

FBN is a web-based, mobile-ready early identification system developed by Mensante Inc., a company Ozersky founded in 2006.

It provides the user with a web-based platform that assesses an individual's mental health and recommends a course of action best suited to address the maladies people are suffering from.

"We're like a GPS to the best available care, whether self care, care by others such as counsellors and therapists, and care by medical practitioners," Ozersky said.

It's a service that's badly needed.

"Our experience over the past decade indicates that employees suffering mental health problems may not always turn to a doctor first. They may confide in their partners and families, seek out counselling through Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and student counselling services, or choose to pursue options in self-directed care," he said.

"There is absolutely a need for a system to optimize mental health care delivery that is inexpensive and medically approved, Ozersky added.

With Feeling Better Now, which was updated earlier this year as FBN2, prospective patients take a test on their computers or mobile device. Their answers to the questions posed by FBN help the program diagnose the patient, assign different levels of risk and offer recommendations for treatment.

Assessments can take as little as 15-20 minutes to complete, even for those experiencing several mental health issues, which can include major depression, generalized anxiety, eating disorders and substance abuse.

"We don't do anything that isn't supported by the scientific literature," Ozersky said, noting that the College of Family Physicians of Canada has endorsed FBN as a practice tool and that the Ontario Medical Association has approved the program for its members' personal use.

"We tell them how to make contact with people who can help them explain what they should do. We provide a checklist of functions that the caregiver should be providing according to the best science."

The website also offers a "toolbox" of resources approved by Mensante's clinical advisory board. Among there are stress reduction tools, online and mobile cognitive behaviour therapy, Smartphone and tablet apps for mental health management and downloadable PDF workbooks to manage symptoms of poor mental health.

Dr. Sam Ozersky

> *Yes, you can renovate your brain, provided it is not a 'tear down' situation and renovation is not extensive*

The upshot of that approach is that it gives the patient greater control over their own care.

"The website is driven by the patient," Ozersky said. "It helps the patient, caregivers and family members optimize the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders according to the best scientific evidence.

"We promote engagement by making them the centre of the care and letting them choose what suits them best."

Another benefit of the online tool is that it helps users avoid the stigma that can be attached to mental illness, and that can increase the chances the patient will seek help, he added.

So far, a number of large enterprises have made FBN available to their employees. Among them are TD Bank Financial Group, ArcelorMittal Dofasco, Healthcare Benefit Trust, Fraser Health Authority in British Columbia, University of British Columbia faculty of medicine, Kingston General Hospital and the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan.

These groups recognize the serious financial implications that can be caused by untreated mental illness, Ozersky said.

He cites research by Ron Kessler, a mental health economist at Harvard University, who estimates that healthcare costs of mental health disorders in the United States reach $3,000 per employee per year. Add on lost productivity and the costs balloon up to $6,000 per employee per year.

Though the Feeling Better Now system is currently available to about 1 million Canadians, Ozersky hopes to see its scope expand. He'd like the Ontario government to adopt it and he is proposing to test the updated version of Feeling Better Now (FBN2) as part of the British health system's NHS Test Beds Program. ■

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Israeli charity crowdfunds for small needs

Hamilton native Naomi Brounstein

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

In the short time since a Hamilton-born Israeli woman co-founded Ten Gav, a crowdfunding charity initiative to help underprivileged Israelis with modest needs, hundreds have signed on to give people a hand up.

Naomi Brounstein, who practised law in Toronto before moving to Ra'anana with her family in 1993, spoke to *The CJN* about what inspired her to create Ten Gav in 2014 with her co-founder partner, Baltimore-native Vivi Mann.

"We'd both been involved in different types of community work over the years and in volunteer work, and we had been trying to hammer out a concept to meet some of the challenges that we saw," Brounstein said.

"We wanted to develop a platform where you could learn something about a family [in need], read a story about them. We knew that people want to give, but they are hesitant. Is the money really going to where they say it's going?... People don't like it when their funds go toward administrative costs. They want to know that they're giving to something or someone and it's going straight there," she said, adding that Ten Gav fundraises separately to cover administrative costs.

She explained that Ten Gav relies on Israel's social workers to apply on behalf of families in need that have active files with the welfare services.

"We have social workers that we work with across the country. They have clients and they go on home visits and they are exposed to things that we don't see," Brounstein said.

"Maybe an older man is a client and he has diabetes and multiple other problems and [a social worker visits] their home and sees an older woman, his wife, washing clothes over the sink. And they're asked, 'Why are you washing clothes over the sink?' And it turns out the washing machine broke down three months before," said Brounstein, who recently obtained a master's degree in social work from Tel Aviv University.

"These are welfare families. Where are they going to get the money for... a washing machine? They're not."

She said the social worker sends Ten Gav an application, detailing the need and the cost, and if the request meets Ten Gav's standards, a profile about a family's need is posted to its website and a crowdfunding campaign begins. About 80 campaigns have been funded to date.

"We made it a policy that no single item that we post exceeds $1,500 or 5,000 shekels. When you give $100 and the entire item is $1,000, you represent a meaningful portion of that item in the end," she said, adding that donations can be made in Canadian and U.S. dollars, British pounds and Israeli shekels.

"There is quite a variety of cases at any given time. We want to have things that speak to different people. You might want to help Reuben with piano lessons, and someone else might want to help an elderly woman get a new bed, and someone else might want to help a teenager get a computer."

She said one of the more creative requests came from a social worker in Ashdod. She had two families in her jurisdiction who each gave birth to a blind baby within two months of each other.

"There is a centre in Petah Tikvah for parents of newborn babies who are severely visually impaired... It's a program that offers 12 sessions."

The issue was that to get from Ashdod to Petah Tikvah would require the families to take three buses.

"We had this creative social worker who put in a request for a driver to bring these two sets of parents twice a week for six weeks so they could participate in these workshops."

In addition to funding individual campaigns on the website, a way to engage young people in the habit of giving is Ten Gav's Bar or Bat Mitzvah Tzedakah Project.

The idea is for bar and bat mitzvah kids to encourage family and friends to contribute to Ten Gav in honour of the milestone.

"That child has the opportunity to tell their friends and family that they would like gifts to be given in honour of Ten Gav, and at the end of the simchah, it's a great educational experience." ■

For more information, visit www.tengav.org.

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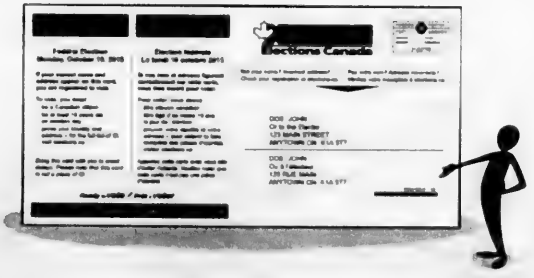

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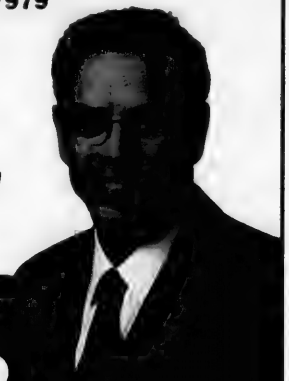

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בית צדק

Israeli startup eases customer service woes

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Eyal Goldfarb

An Israeli startup designed to help businesses improve customer service, all the while reducing support overhead, engaging more customers online, tracking customer behaviour and boosting sales, is gaining traction world-wide as its Toronto office continues to flourish.

Eyal Goldfarb, 30, who, since 2014, has been the North American director of sales for Nanorep, an Israeli high-tech company that utilizes automatic intelligence to reduce the amount of resources required in answering commonly-asked questions, said what sets this company apart from others is its unique algorithm that helps customers get answers to their questions in an instant.

"Nanorep narrows down the search to typically a singular answer, or maybe two or three, depending on how specific your question is, or what is recorded in the knowledge base [of a website]," Goldfarb explained.

"The knowledge base is the back end of the system, where all the information is stored. Basically Nanorep is meant to narrow down your search, so you don't have to scour the website, you don't have to call an agent, you don't have to send an email. It's instant, it's automated 24/7, and it could even be personalized.

"When you ask a question it might prompt you to log in, and if you log in, the system will recognize who you are. Let's say you're a customer with Rogers and you have to verify who you are, we can have a similar verification process through the widget, where, once we verify you, information can be provided that is relevant to your specific account. It doesn't have to be a generic answer, it could be much more personalized."

He said that unlike their competition, Nanorep's system is able to analyze an entire phrase or question, accounting for spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, synonyms, and different ways of asking the same question, rather than relying on a keyword-based search.

"With our competition, they are keyword-based and once its system recognizes a popular keyword, it will provide every article that contains that keyword, much like a Google search. As a customer who is not interested in doing research, who just wants the answer to a question, they don't want to sift through all that information," he said.

Goldfarb said most customers will check a website first to see if they can find the information independently. Contacting a customer service representative can be a hassle for the customer, and a drain on resources for the business.

Nanorep promises a 40 per cent reduction in contact centre call volume by deflecting low value, repetitive inquiries with its self-learning technology that automatically imports content from the website's FAQ page, customer knowledge bases and other external sources.

"Rather than having to scour the website for the answer to a question, like, 'How much does a certain product cost? Does your company ship to a certain country?' you can ask a direct question and get a direct answer without having to reach a customer service agent over the phone."

Goldfarb, who was born in Israel and moved to Toronto when he was five, explained how he came to lead the Canadian office of a young startup, which is quickly making a name for itself around the world.

"In 2012, I led a Birthright trip and decided to stay in Israel and... scour the job market," he said, adding that he noticed there were many opportunities for fluent English speakers.

"Also, I'm fluent in Hebrew, so that helped, I'm sure, but [Nanorep] was looking for native English speakers to represent their company," he said.

"I had studied business. I worked in sales before, I had done some finance and trading, but I had never been in high tech. I started as a sales rep, and I was selling the product to different companies around the world."

Nanorep, founded in 2007 by four co-founders, three of whom are in their 30s, received financial help from local Israeli investors and by 2009, its product was ready for the market.

After working in Israel for two years, Goldfarb relocated to build the company from Toronto. He said since he started in 2012, the company has doubled in size and has received more investment funding.

Today, Nanorep boasts clients including Ikea in Israel, Vodafone, which is based in the United Kingdom, and Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas.

"Mostly we work with small and medium-sized businesses but we're trying to break in to the large enterprises. That's the direction we're heading in," he said. ■

For more information, visit www.nanorep.com.

Canadian MDs to train for possible Israeli disaster

JANICE ARNOLD
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Dr. Alexander Khemlin

Twenty Canadian doctors will take a crash course in emergency medicine in Israel this fall, with the understanding they may be called upon to return in the event of a major or prolonged natural disaster or conflict.

This is a pilot project organized by Canadian Magen David Adom for Israel (CMDA), patterned on one launched in France last year. Magen David Adom (MDA), Israel's national emergency medical service, is trying to develop an international emergency unit made up of volunteer foreign doctors who are prepared to come to the country and assist on short notice.

Daniel Amzallag, who is co-ordinating the project for CMDA, said that although most people immediately think of war or devastating terrorism when speaking of a national emergency in Israel, MDA is actually focused on preparing the country for a possible earthquake.

Israel lies on a major fault line, the Great Syrian-African Rift, he said. "According to scientists, every 100 years [Israel experiences] strong shaking – 6.0 or higher on the [Richter] scale. The last one was 91 years ago." An earthquake of that magnitude would be enough, it is estimated, to seriously damage 60 to 70 per cent of the infrastructure and potentially cause tens or hundreds of thousands of injuries, he said.

"We want to develop an international unit that is ready and motivated in case they are needed," he said. "They have to know how to use Israeli equipment, ambulances and field hospitals, and be comfortable working with Israeli staff."

About half of the 10 French doctors who had trained in a pilot project for that country last year volunteered during the Gaza conflict in the summer of 2014, Amzallag added.

This past summer, 24 French doctors were enrolled in the intensive training program the Canadian doctors are taking from Nov. 8-12.

Coming from Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa, Hamilton and the Toronto area, they will fly out as a group from Pearson Airport on Nov. 5 and return Nov. 15, covering their own expenses.

The program, based in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, includes both classroom study and two days of field training on MDA ambulances. On the last day, the Canadians will take part in a mass-casualty drill with MDA workers, as well as police and fire departments.

Dr. Alexander Khemlin, a Russian-born family physician in Richmond Hill, Ont., signed up because it reminds him of the reserve military duty he performed for almost 15 years in Israel as a medical officer in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), after regular service.

It's a way for him to continue to contribute to the country that was his home for 19 years and where he practised medicine, while enhancing skills that can benefit Canada where he has lived since 2010.

Although he participated in all of Israel's military operations from 1996 to 2011, he never had any formal emergency medicine (EM) training. He gained experience in that field during his two-year residency in Goderich, Ont., before assuming his current position at Mackenzie Health hospital in Richmond Hill, Ont. in 2013.

He continues to regularly perform shifts in emergency departments in small communities in Ontario.

One aspect of EM he has never trained in is working on an ambulance.

"After moving to Canada, I missed that experience of going to 'miluim' [reserve duty], doing something to protect the Israeli people, serving the country. When I heard about the CMDA project, I thought that's exactly what I would like to do to keep myself in the loop," he said.

"Despite the fact that my family moved to Canada, we love Israel and continue supporting it." He and wife Mirit have two children aged 16 and 14.

"We strongly believe that every Jew has to find a way to contribute to Israel by serving, volunteering or donating. I believe [I] will set an example to my kids, to do some act to support Israel, when they grow up."

While he prays Israel will never experience such a crisis, Khemlin observes, "All Israeli history and recent changes in the Middle East region indicate that it actually might happen. If such a worst scenario comes true, I will do my best to get ready as soon as possible to fly to Israel."

The pilot project is now at capacity. Khemlin urges other Canadian doctors to consider enrolling in any future training sessions.

"I believe it is the most meaningful way to give back to Israel while we enjoy a life of peace here in Canada." ■

Lullabies from Exile

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The inside story behind the creation of UJA Federation

Epil

The Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus

Leo and Sala Goldhar

By Leo Goldhar

When a friend asked me to speak to a group of teen leaders from NCSY (National Conference of Synagogue Youth) last year I had no idea at all why on earth these young kids would ever be interested in what I had to say. "What would I possibly talk about?" I asked her. "Tell them about the Lebovic Campus and how it came about. It's a story they have to hear!" That actually made no sense to me since I figured it's not the kind of story teenagers would ever want to sit through. However, because I felt I owed it to my friend and respected her opinion, I reluctantly went ahead and spoke to her group of about 50 18-year-olds one evening in Thornhill.

It ended up be an evening I never expected. They were fascinated with the story and the history of the campus and wanted to find out more and more about how it came to be. It was that night that I realized this was a story that needed to be told and it was a story that could help everyone in the community understand that things don't "just happen," and that if we want the kind of Jewish community in which our kids will grow up as confident and proud Jews it takes leadership and action and caring--and not just talking and complaining.

And that's why I eventually decided to put these thoughts on paper and get this story out. I wanted to help inspire the next generation so that they could understand what we can achieve if good people act together and believe in the future. Where would we be today as a community if previous generations hadn't taken the risks and had the vision to build the institutions that have made the Toronto Jewish community as vibrant as it is today?

Where would we have been without the original Brunswick YMHA, or the Spadina "Y" (now the beautiful Nadal JCC) , or Mt. Sinai Hospital, or Baycrest, or the North "Y" -now being rebuilt as the Prosserman JCC on Sherman Campus? For me, personally, my roots in this community go back to when I first played handball at the Spadina Y just as it opened in the early 50's. I had come to realize that 60 years later a new generation needed that kind of place as well.

Hearing those questions from those NCSY kids that night and seeing their enthusiasm, I realized our future was in good hands and I felt so proud to have helped build a Jewish future for them.

When Ted Sokolsky first pulled me into the Vaughan Campus project I had no idea what I was getting into. Like I said before, I was new to this "community stuff" yet before I knew it, I was involved in design, financing, fundraising and managing - things I never thought I'd be working on as a volunteer. It wasn't always easy and it often became frustrating but I stuck with it because I believed in Ted's vision and his goal of inspiring the next generation to join in the responsibility of building this community. Ted believed we had one last opportunity for the older generation south of Steeles to pass on a legacy of community building and do what generations had done before--build for the future. I am in awe of the fact that so many members of our community took the risks and made the investment to build a place their own kids might never use. They believed in community so much that they helped raise the funds for the $185 million project.

Sure there were plenty of disappointments along the way. I was disappointed that members of the community north of Steeles didn't step forward financially to the extent I thought they should. Let's hope the investment we have made in their children by strengthening the new community up north will turn that around in the future. I was disappointed that more donors did not step up to the plate. The few that give (the Good Guys) are pioneers and heroes. The many who have the means but hide behind the others have always been a mystery to me. Too many families fight about money instead of enjoying the *nachas* sharing it with community can bring.

I was also disappointed that many of our community institutions didn't want to take the risks and join us on Lebovic. Many organizations, synagogues and schools weren't willing to make the investment in the growing community in Vaughan despite the fact that's where so many young families were headed. In my opinion, they did the community a disservice and may pay the consequences in dwindling memberships and involvement.

Ironically, the reluctance of other organizations to join the campus turned out to be a bit of a blessing in disguise. Federation had originally offered land-leases to other community groups based on a cost of just $600,000 an acre. Yet it became clear that after Reena and Bialik Hebrew Day School, there would be no more takers. Fortunately, Federation was eventually able to sell that surplus land for upwards of several millions of dollars an acre. (We also made the right decision to build underground parking--that saved us so much land!) The economic recession may have slowed our fundraising but the real estate boom had brought us a well-needed dividend for which the community benefited tremendously.

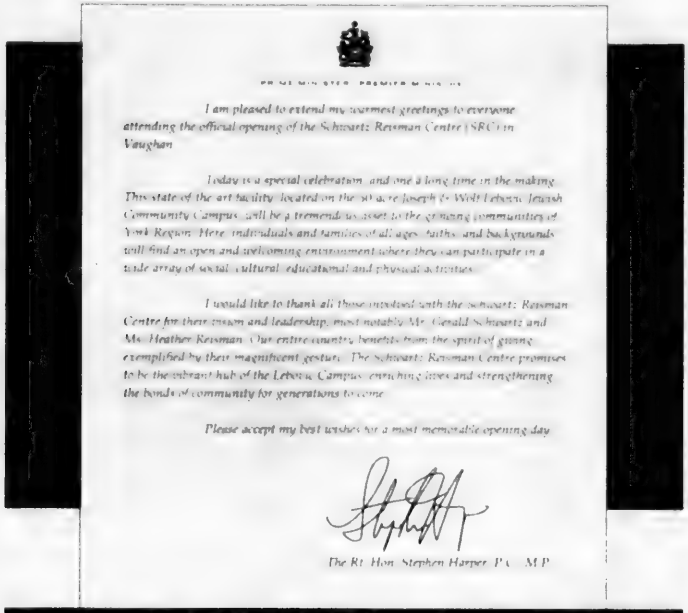
Yes there were disappointments but there were tremendous ups as well. I was thrilled that the Royal Bank of Canada believed in us and came up with the original loan to help close the deal on the land. I was overwhelmed by the incredible support we got from the City of Vaughan and four different mayors who helped make it possible--Lorna

Tomorrow

's Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus

ogue

At the opening of the Lev & Sala Goldhar Conference & Celebration Centre



I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the official opening of the Schwartz/Reisman Centre (SRC) in Vaughan.

Today is a special celebration, and one a long time in the making. This state-of-the-art facility, located on the 50-acre Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus, will be a tremendous asset to the growing community of York Region. Here, individuals and families of all ages, faiths, and backgrounds will find an open and welcoming environment where they can participate in a wide array of social, cultural, educational and physical activities.

I would like to thank all those involved with the Schwartz/Reisman Centre for their vision and leadership, most notably Mr. Gerald Schwartz and Ms. Heather Reisman. Our entire country benefits from the spirit of giving exemplified by their magnificent gesture. The Schwartz/Reisman Centre promises to be the vibrant hub of the Lebovic Campus, enriching lives and strengthening the bonds of community for generations to come.

Please accept my best wishes for a most memorable opening day.

The Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.

A letter from Prime Minister Stephen Harper on the official opening of the Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Jackson, Michael Di Biase, Linda Jackson and the excellent current Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua. All four of those mayors were integral to the success of the project.

I remember, in fact, taking a copy of a wonderful book to Mayor Lorna Jackson written by Jaclyn Shulman and Bonnie Goldstein called "Voices from the Heart." The book was written in honour of the 50th Anniversary of Israel and highlighted the Toronto Jewish community's involvement in the Jewish state. I was hoping to introduce the Vaughan Campus Project and I wanted her to understand how deep our commitment to building community was. After that meeting we never looked back. The City of Vaughan guided us through the municipal planning process, negotiated on our behalf with the local developers and helped create the beautiful park south of the Campus that is so important to TanenbaumCHAT and the Schwartz/Reisman Centre. They were true partners right front the beginning.

In telling this story I wanted to personally thank so many people who helped make this dream come true. I know I will be leaving many names out--so many deserve to be thanked--but I want to mention a special few who made the Campus come to life and were incredible colleagues. I can't overstate what our master architect Guela Solow Ruda brought to the project. Her passion and brilliance guided us from day one. Our fabulous construction committee headed up by Sheldon Goodman, Lou Greenbaum and Michael Naiberg provided the best professional guidance anyone could have asked for. They did the heavy lifting behind the scenes and the results sure show.

The Lebovic Campus was an enormous task, the scope of which the community had never taken on before. It was more than bricks and mortar, it was ideas and ingenuity and guts. Paul Morton and Michael Levy were critical in developing our strategy of outsourcing the building management and physical fitness functions of the JCC. In fact, Michael Levy brought his personal entrepreneurship to our cause and not only created the business model and design used on Lebovic but helped bring them to Nadal and Prosserman as well. Thanks also to David Goldstein who was working with us from day one on so much of our strategy. My campus management co-chair Ariella Rohringer was also terrific in bringing business acumen to the running of all three of our campuses. And the late great Gordy Wolfe z'l helped create a staff model to incorporate these business strategies within a communal framework and that model still stands today.

Few people know that we had many opportunities to purchase land off Bathurst Street, some as a far west as Dufferin. I stuck to my guns and insisted we would only buy property with Bathurst Street frontage. And the reason I did that kind of sums up the entire purpose for building the Vaughan Campus and why I'm writing this story.

We weren't just building a JCC or a school or a banquet hall. We were building a new community. There had been lots of attempts to develop new Jewish communities along Leslie Street and Bayview in Richmond Hill but those attempts petered out. Whether we like or not, our community clings to Bathurst Street and I knew young families who had made the decision to move north would love to be linked to Bathurst Street as well. It's the spine that links our community together - north to south - and it's unique in North America.

Take that long drive along Bathurst Street yourself. See the shuls and schools and stores and UJA lawn signs and feel the breadth and depth of what we have here in Toronto that is so special. Bathurst Street, with all its traffic and ugly strip plazas is still a thing of beauty. It's a symbol of belonging and caring and now the Lebovic Campus joins that tumultuous family as well.

And that's what it's all about: building for our collective Jewish family and our own families as well. That crazy Bathurst Street membership card is more important than you can imagine. It can frustrate you at times, but in the end it's a symbol of our shared past, present and our amazing future together.

To everyone reading this chapter, I hope you have the opportunity to help write the next chapter and the dozens that must follow. Things don't just happen--we make them happen together and one day soon I hope you too will have a great story to write.

And finally to my beautiful wife Sala and my amazing children--thank you for your understanding and support all these years. I hope you are as proud of the work I have done for community as I am of you guys. I think my assignment is finally done and I have to say, it's been a privilege.

Leo Goldhar is a Past UJA Campaign Chair, the Founding Chair of the Vaughan Campus Development Committee, and Co-Chair of UJA Federation's Real Estate Development and Property Management Committee.

INTERNATIONAL

Israeli volunteers help Syrian refugees in Europe

GAVIN RABINOWITZ
JTA, LESBOS, GREECE

As the small rubber dinghy crowded with Syrians and Afghans emerged from the midnight-black sea to land on a desolate pebble beach, the first people to greet the bewildered and frightened refugees were two Israelis.

"Does anyone need a doctor?" Majeda Kardosh, 27, a nurse from Nazareth, shouted repeatedly in Arabic as the asylum seekers scrambled ashore amid cries of celebration and tears of relief at having survived the short but perilous crossing from Turkey to this Greek island.

Her team partner, Tali Shaltiel, 31, a physician from Jerusalem, stood knee deep in the water, helping a shivering four-year-old girl out of her wet clothes and a pair of inflatable armbands that would have provided little protection had the overloaded boat capsized at sea.

Kardosh and Shaltiel are part of a small advance group of volunteers from IsraAid, an Israeli non-governmental organization that is trying to provide some assistance to the hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants who are flowing into Europe.

While IsraAid has plenty of experience in disaster relief and assistance in 31 countries – from the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa – this mission presents a unique challenge: the beneficiaries come from countries that are traditionally hostile, or even officially still at war, with Israel.

But for Shaltiel, that's unimportant.

"You are meeting fellow human beings," she said. "You see agony and pain, you see a need, then what does it matter where the person is from.

"In the end, you hope that the human contact will bring us forward," she added.

But Shaltiel, who also volunteered for the IsraAid mission in South Sudan, does acknowledge that for the Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans and Pakistanis – who make up the vast majority of those arriving – having Israelis as a first contact in Europe can be unexpected and unnerving.

"We try to find a balance," Shaltiel said. "On the one hand, we are wearing IsraAid shirts and speaking most of the time in Hebrew to each other. But, ultimately, you just want people to get help, you don't want to put up barriers to that."

Plus, in reality, even though the Israelis are wearing bright blue Stars of David on their shirts, most of the refugees don't even notice amid the chaos and tumult of emotions of the landing beaches, said Kardosh, who does most of the communicating with them in Arabic.

IsraAid volunteers including Naama Gorodischer, centre, help refugees reach the shore after their boat overturns off the Greek coast last month. PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

> *You see pain and agony...what does it matter where that person is from.*
>
> **Tali Shaltiel, IsraAid volunteer**

Among those who recognize the T-shirts, most have a positive response – although some are resistant. One man who was receiving treatment from Shaltiel kept asking Kardosh, "Tell me the truth, is she a Jew?"

"I tried to ignore him, but he persisted. Eventually I said to him, 'She is here to help you, what does it matter who she is?'" Kardosh said. "After about 10 minutes he came back and offered Tali a biscuit and apologized."

Another issue for IsraAid has been finding Arabic-speaking personnel who can communicate with the refugees. That's particularly important for the second part of IsraAid's mission, which is to provide psychological first-aid to those who have experienced trauma.

One IsraAid volunteer social worker spent Saturday providing support to the family of a five-year-old girl who drowned on the crossing. Another team was on the island of Rhodes assisting survivors from a boat that sank, killing 34, including 15 infants and children.

"We are working in complicated conditions and our Arabic speakers have that experience of working in difficult situations," said Naama Gorodischer, IsraAid's global programs manager.

Still, it's a challenge for those who have never done field work before.

"Usually I'm dressed in heels and a skirt with my regular shift and going to the gym four times a week," said Kardosh, who is also a lecturer at the Schoenbrunn Nursing School at Tel Aviv University.

"Now I'm here," she said, pointing at the beach strewn with deflated dinghies, hundreds of life jackets, lost shoes and trash – the debris of thousands of journeys.

At the moment, the main aim of the team is to assess the needs of the refugees and find gaps in the services provided by the overwhelmed Greek authorities and other volunteer groups.

IsraAid plans to expand the medical teams and eventually establish a mobile clinic that will provide emergency care for new arrivals on the beaches. It will also expand the psycho-social help to bases in the registration and refugee camps that have been set up.

The NGO also has volunteers providing assistance on the Croatia-Hungary border. Eventually IsraAid plans to be in final-destination countries like Germany, where they hope to help with refugee rehabilitation.

"The aim is to have a presence as an organization along the entire journey," Gorodischer said.

On the beach in Lesbos, the work goes beyond the medical. When she is finished dealing with the hypothermia, dehydration, wounds and illnesses of the travellers, Shaltiel gathers some of the refugees to explain their situation to them.

Most have only a vague idea of which country they are in, or that they are on an island and not the mainland. None realize that their landing spot is still a gruelling 40-mile walk from the registration camps.

"It's safer to stay here during the night and start your walk in the morning," she tells them, giving them a map made by the IsraAid team with instructions written in Arabic.

The volunteers look to assist in any way they can.

"The situation is chaotic, you don't always know what you need in the beginning, so we keep looking for ways to help, to see what's needed," said Boaz Arad, a volunteer who was documenting IsraAid activities and also organizing the logistics and transportation.

After finding hundreds of people sleeping in the open along the road, IsraAid volunteers bought sleeping bags to distribute to families with children. They were also waiting for a shipment of donated baby carriers from Israel.

The American Jewish Committee said it was increasing funding to IsraAid, which is also supported by other American Jewish groups and the Israeli government.

"During this holiest period of the Jewish year, we are proud to assist... in offering vital help to Syrians who fled the horrific war in their homeland and seek a new start," AJC executive director David Harris said.

For Shaltiel, the sight of tens of thousands of refugees walking across Europe was especially poignant.

"When we say 'never again,' it is also an obligation to do something," she said. "Apparently I can't stop the war in Syria, but I can do something." ■

OPINION

Tensions flare dangerously in east Jerusalem

Yair Lootsteen

Armon HaNatziv, or East Talpiot as it is officially known, is a Jewish neighbourhood in south Jerusalem. It was built, beginning in the 1970s, adjacent to an impressive complex overlooking the Old City, which has housed the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization's headquarters in the city since 1948. Previously, it served as the official residence of the British High Commissioner, hence the name Armon HaNatziv – the Governor's Palace.

The neighbourhood, now housing more than 15,000 residents, is beyond the Green Line, but within Jerusalem's extended municipal boundaries, as drawn after the Six Day War. It borders several Arab neighbourhoods, formerly West Bank villages now part of Jerusalem.

I know many people living in Armon HaNatziv. On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, friends hosted out-of-town guests for the festive meal. Late that night, as the guests made their way out of the area, rocks thrown in their direction narrowly missed their car as they drove on a road flanked by Tzur Bachar, an Arab neighbourhood.

Alexander Levlovitz and his two daughters were less fortunate. Later that night, as they drove home toward Armon HaNatziv on the same road, their car was hit by rocks thrown from the hillside below Tzur Bachar. Alexander lost control of his vehicle, causing it to overturn. He was killed and both his daughters were injured. Police called Levlovitz's death an act of terrorism. Residents of Tzur Bachar were adamant it was an unfortunate traffic accident.

Violence – unacceptable violence – is spiralling in the Holy City. It's not yet out of control, but east Jerusalem and its residents, which mostly stayed out of the fray during the first and second intifadahs have become much more bellicose lately.

Not limited to the southern environs of the city, hostile acts are now commonplace in many parts of east Jerusalem. Stones and Molotov cocktails are regular fare, while knife attacks, shootings and random use of vehicles to plough into innocent pedestrians are rarer.

Those most affected are members of the security forces and residents of neighbourhoods on the seam between the east and west Jerusalem. Recent news reports are crammed with interviews with Armon HaNatziv residents living directly on that seam, describing from their balconies how their formerly idyllic views of neighbouring Arab villages have been replaced with images of scorched outer walls of their homes, having been targeted by gasoline-filled incendiary devices, and of piles of rocks and other projectiles recently thrown into their yards.

I haven't heard a convincing argument about the specific catalyst for all of this. Some say it is dates back to last summer's horrific murder of Mohammed Abu Khdeir, an innocent teenager burned alive by Jewish terrorists after being randomly kidnapped outside his home in northern Jerusalem. Supposedly, this was in revenge for three Israeli teens who were kidnapped and murdered by Palestinian terrorists.

Other commentators and government spokespeople assert the violence stems from Muslim incitement falsely accusing Israel of planning changes to the status quo on the Temple Mount, thus allegedly endangering Al-Aqsa, Islam's third-most-holy site.

Our government's response was to start building tall fences around Jewish homes directly on the seam and to "liberalize" police rules of engagement, allowing sharpshooters to fire live rounds at stone-throwers, and to threaten judges' promotions if Palestinian perpetrators aren't punished more harshly. Thankfully, the attorney general nixed the latter two initiatives.

Instead of fences and threats, Israelis, and even more so Palestinians, need some semblance of hope, some light at the end of the tunnel. There hasn't been any for years now, with leaders of both sides unable or unwilling to renew dialogue in good faith.

My friends in Armon HaNatziv have no plans to leave. Nor do the 300,000 Palestinians who live in Jerusalem.

As we celebrated our High Holidays and Muslims their Eid el Adha, let's pray that calmer heads prevail and that we somehow put our heads together. The alternatives aren't pretty. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 1, 2015

Much-hailed 'world Jewry' project yet to get off the ground

BEN SALES
JTA TEL AVIV

With a budget reaching US$300 million, it was conceived as a broad partnership between the Israeli government and leading Diaspora Jewish groups. Its goal: to create a stronger connection between global Jews and Israel.

But nearly two years after its launch was announced with much fanfare – and after a string of delays – the Joint Initiative of the Government of Israel and World Jewry has yet to get off the ground. Even as an Israeli government ministry moves forward with appointing its staff, two of the three bodies that once led the project are now distancing themselves from it, and funding remains uncertain.

"There's been a lot of politics surrounding this initiative," said Jay Ruderman, whose Ruderman Family Foundation focuses on strengthening Israel-Diaspora ties. "This initiative is talking about being around for the long term. The important question to ask is, who's in charge? Who's making the decisions? How open are they to learning about the Diaspora and treating them as equals?"

Inaugurated in November 2013, the initiative was conceived to fund Israel education and Jewish identity-building programs in Diaspora communities – in camps, schools and on campus – and finance young Diaspora Jews coming on short- and long-term trips to Israel. The project hopes to replicate the success of Birthright Israel, the free 10-day trips to Israel that have drawn more than 500,000 participants, by building platforms for similar trips and programs that will make Diaspora youth feel closer to Israel.

But what has happened instead is a series of delays, caused in part by a war and last year's election campaign, and further exacerbated by vague promises and a lack of concrete funding. When the project was approved in June 2014, Jewish Agency for Israel Chairman Natan Sharansky predicted program proposals would begin to be issued within a month, but they have yet to materialize. Funders from the Diaspora, meant to provide a majority of the budget, have not yet committed to donating.

Israel's cabinet approved the project last year as a tripartite partnership: Israel's Prime Minister's Office would direct the initiative in concert with the Jewish Agency, which would represent major Diaspora organizations, and the Diaspora Ministry would manage the day-to-day operations.

The cabinet voted to invest $50 million in the initiative by 2017 and a total of $100 million by 2022. The government wanted Diaspora sources – federations, philanthropic foundations and individual donors – to contribute double those sums for two-thirds of the initiative's $300 million total budget.

Natan Sharansky, left, with Benjamin Netanyahu. FLASH 90 PHOTO

But the initiative has yet to launch. A subsequent cabinet decision in June, weeks after Israel's new governing coalition formed, put the Diaspora Ministry in charge of the initiative's policy and its operations – effectively removing the Prime Minister's Office. In early August, the Jewish Agency quit the project, complaining in a letter to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that it had been frozen out of the decision making process.

"Until the program is returned to its original conception and direction, we no longer see this as the joint initiative between the Government of Israel and World Jewry and therefore can no longer see ourselves part of it," Sharansky and his agency's board chairman, Charles Ratner, wrote in the Aug. 6 letter. "This undertaking has transformed simply into a funding framework for programs to be conducted by a single government ministry."

The Diaspora Ministry says it has remained faithful to the initiative's original goals and that it will begin funding programs across the Jewish world by early 2016. But a Diaspora Ministry official told *JTA* that the ministry will have exclusive final say over which programs are approved.

The ministry official said the funding will be allocated across the Jewish ideological spectrum. A steering committee appointed by the ministry includes a former Sheldon Adelson deputy, a Detroit federation executive, a Holocaust education activist and an Israeli philanthropist. The Jewish Agency has also been offered a seat on the committee.

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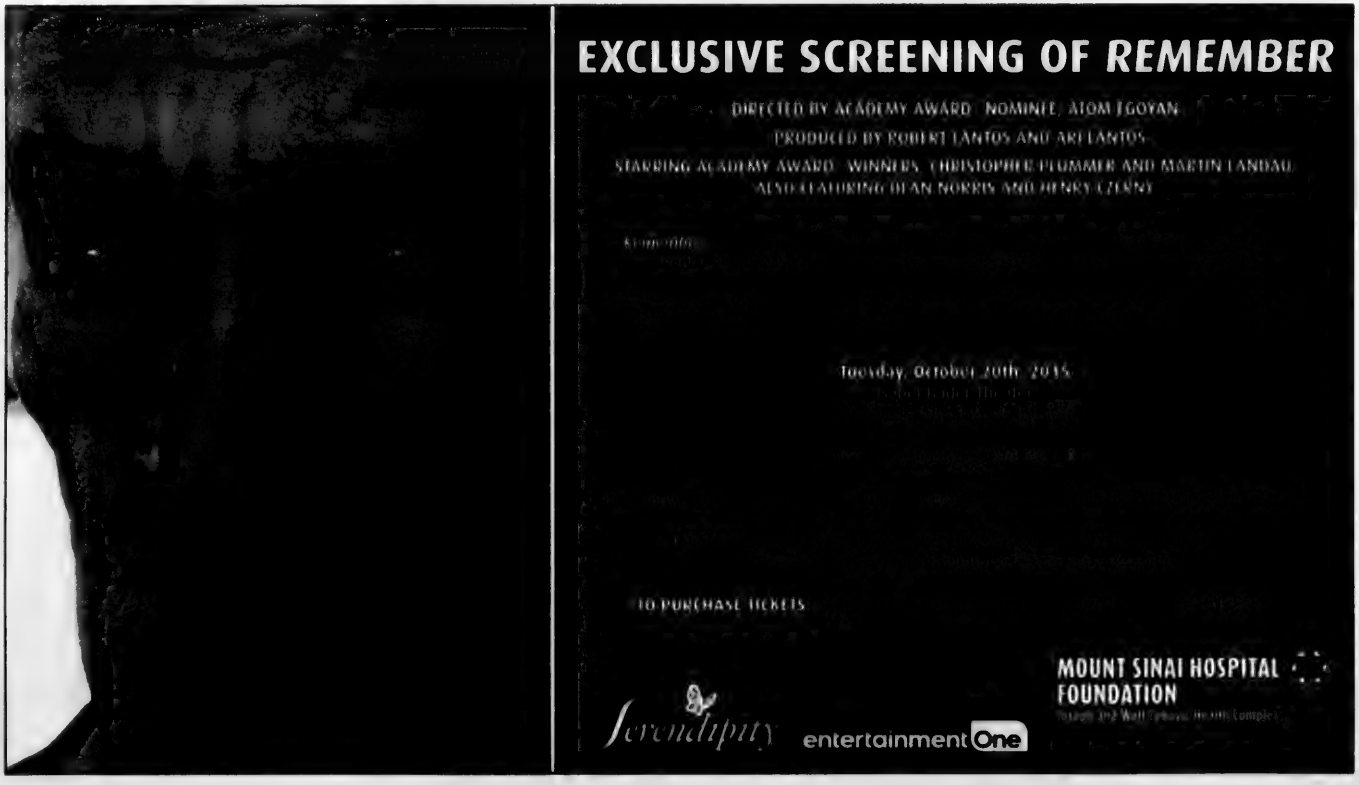
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Ambitious Diaspora-Israel project appears to have stalled

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"The professional staff will work together with federations and philanthropies," the official said. "The initiative doesn't look at denominations or political affiliations. It looks at platforms."

However, the ministry official could not name any confirmed funders who have committed to matching the government's budget for the project. And the umbrella Jewish communal organization in the United States, the Jewish Federations of North America, (JFNA) supports the Jewish Agency's protest of the initiative.

"We are proud of the Jewish Agency's ongoing effort to meet the needs of the Jewish people, and we support their strategy as they move forward with the Government of Israel's initiative," JFNA president Jerry Silverman said in a statement to *JTA*.

It isn't even clear whether the Diaspora Ministry has Netanyahu's support; a spokesman for the prime minister would not comment on the issue. And Netanyahu sent a letter to Sharansky and Ratner, the Jewish Agency chairs, weeks after their split with the Diaspora Ministry suggesting that he would like to continue working with them toward the initiative's goals.

> *The initiative doesn't look at denominations or political affiliations*

"The Jewish Agency is our historic and invaluable partner to this end" of strengthening Israel-Diaspora ties, Netanyahu wrote on Aug. 17. He added that he hopes to "expand our co-operation even further."

Despite the conflicts and unknowns, the Diaspora Ministry is optimistic that the initiative will move forward. The ministry is hiring a professional staff to oversee it, housed in a government-funded nonprofit that manages the project. The official said the nonprofit would launch pilot programs within the next several months.

"There are a number of foundations and philanthropies who have already been in talks with the ministry," the official said. "It's good to be ambitious." ■

ALEXI ROSENFELD/IDF SPOKESMAN/ISRAEL SUN

Shanah Tovah!

Israel Defence Forces soldiers on training pause to share the Rosh Hashanah tradition of eating an apple with honey.

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(Emil L. Fackenheim, 1916 - 2003)

[The 614th mitzvah:]...the authentic Jew of today is forbidden to hand Hitler another posthumous victory.

(Emil L. Fackenheim, *The Jewish Return Into History*, 1978)

Emil L. Fackenheim (Halle, 1916 - Jerusalem, 2003), studied with Leo Baeck in the *Hochschule fuer die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Berlin). Following arrest in Sachsenhausen after *Kristallnacht* (1938), he narrowly escaped Nazi Germany to Scotland. Subsequently interned by the British in Quebec, he completed his philosophy doctorate at the U. of Toronto after his release. After a long career there, Fackenheim made *aliyah* to Israel in 1983.

Fackenheim's ground-breaking texts on modern philosophy and Judaism include *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought* (1967) and *Encounters between Judaism and Modern Philosophy. A Preface to Future Jewish Thought* (1973). After Israel's miraculous Six Day War victory in 1967, he focused on *God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections (1968), The Jewish Return into History. Reflections in the Age of Auschwitz and a New Jerusalem* (1978), and *To Mend the World. Foundations of Future Jewish Thought* (1982).

Panelists and Discussants: Prof. James Diamond (U. of Waterloo); Prof. Kenneth Green (U. of Toronto); Prof. Paul Merkley (Carleton U.); Prof. Michael L. Morgan (Indiana U.); Prof. David Novak (U. of Toronto); Prof. Clifford Orwin (U. of Toronto); Prof. David Patterson (U. of Texas); Prof. Sharon Portnoff (U. of Connecticut); Dr. Howard Price (Beth Tikvah); Prof. Martin Yaffe (U. of North Texas); Prof. Sally Zerker (York U.)

Jordanan's King Abdullah refuses to talk to Benjamin Netanyahu

AVI ISSACHAROFF
JERUSALEM

Jordan's King Abdullah II is refusing to meet with, or even speak to, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu regarding the current upsurge in tension relating to the Temple Mount, Arab sources told *The Times of Israel*.

According to the sources, American diplomats have been urging the king to help calm tensions via direct communication with Netanyahu. But the king has thus far not been prepared to host or even speak by phone with the prime minister, the sources said, because he believes Netanyahu would portray such interaction as proof of "business as usual" in Israeli-Jordanian ties.

Israel's Prime Minister's Office had no immediate comment.

Abdullah warned that bilateral ties would be affected by any further Israeli provocations at the site. Israeli officials then responded anonymously that Jordan was partly to blame for recent violence, since the Jordanian-appointed Waqf, which administers the Temple Mount's Muslim holy sites, has allowed Palestinian youths to stockpile weapons.

The *Rai Al-Youm* newspaper, edited by the anti-Israeli journalist Abdel Bari Atwan, reported on Sept. 24 that Abdullah has rebuffed several efforts by Netanyahu to speak with him. The newspaper said that Jordan has changed its response to upsurges in tension: while it has not hurried to recall its ambassador from Tel Aviv, the king, however, is not talking to Netanyahu.

In previous rounds of tension, contacts between Netanyahu and the king yielded promises by Israel to avoid provocations, such as visits by politicians to the Temple Mount. On Sept. 20, however, Agriculture Minister Uri Arie, visited the site.

Bilateral tensions notwithstanding, security relations between Israel and Jordan are being maintained for now. Jordan is understood to be providing Israel with intelligence assistance in various fields, including regarding the presence of Islamic State-affiliated groups close to the border with Syria. ■

Shabbat dispute slows down Tel Aviv to Jerusalem high-speed train

JTA
JERUSALEM

The completion of a fast train connection between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem will be delayed by two years because of the Israeli Economy Ministry's refusal to allow work on Shabbat, Israel Railway said.

The statement on Sept.25 said the project, which is due to be completed in 2017, may take until 2019, Army Radio reported. Israel Railways, which, like most public transportation bodies in Israel does not provide services to the public on Shabbat, also said it would cancel departures immediately before and after Shabbat in favour of work on the fast connection during week days.

The cancellations, which are believed to affect at least 30,000 passengers, follow a dispute involving the train company, the Ministry of Economy under Aryeh Deri of the haredi Shas party and the Ministry of Transportation under Israel Katz of Likud.

Katz said Deri's ministry was blocking work on Shabbat, but Deri's office told Army Radio that "if Israel Railways wants to allow work on Shabbat, it needs to attach the Transportation Ministry's approval and will be granted permission."

Israel Railway's current connection between the cities, situated 75 kilometres apart, has a travel time of 81 minutes.

Public transportation on Shabbat is a divisive issue in Israel, where advocates of the ban say allowing public transportation would violate the status quo – a series of agreements reached in the 1950s between the Labor-led government and haredi leaders, which attempted to regulate issues of religion and state.

Many haredi and religious Jewish Israelis oppose transportation on Shabbat because they perceive it as a violation of the fifth commandment, one of Judaism's 10 basic laws.

But many non-religious Israelis perceive the ban as an unreasonable instance of religious coercion, and withholding of what they regard as a basic service by the state. Avigdor Lieberman, head of the right-ist-secularist Yisrael Beitenu party and a former transportation minister, told Army Radio the incident involving Israel Railways "shows the government allowed the public to be held hostage by haredi parties." ■

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Sabina Maxis LL.B., TEP, is a tax lawyer at Devry Smith Frank LLP with expertise in business, cross border, trust, and estate tax planning. She advises on retirement and executive compensation, philanthropy, and charitable giving. She is designated as a trust and estate practitioner with the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP).

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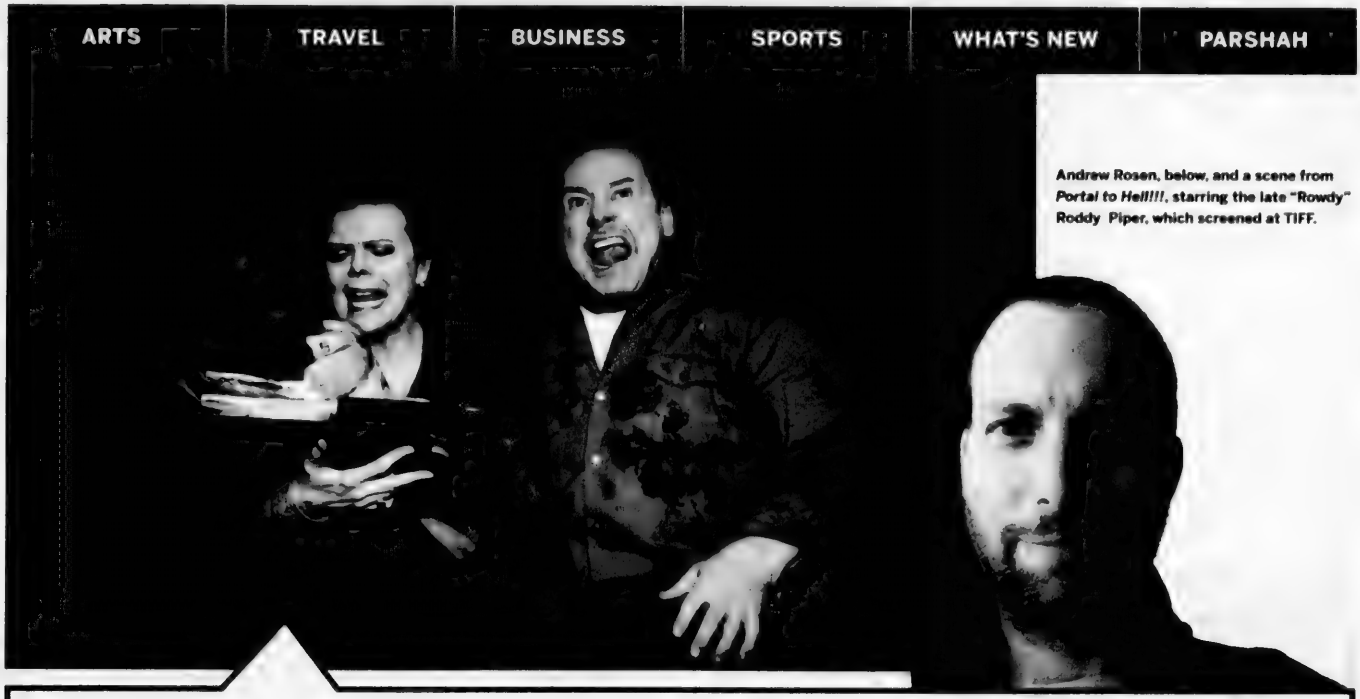


Andrew Rosen, below, and a scene from *Portal to Hell!!!!*, starring the late "Rowdy" Roddy Piper, which screened at TIFF.

Aircraft Pictures soars to new heights

AMY SKY
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Andrew Rosen has a lot on his plate. As the co-owner of a Toronto media production company, he and his business partner Anthony Leo currently have multiple projects on the go, including one with heavyweight executive producer Angelina Jolie.

Rosen and Leo started Aircraft Pictures 10 years ago and have continuously developed and produced scripted television shows and movies across traditional and digital platforms.

"We just say now we're creating content for the screen, it doesn't matter what screen you're really watching it on," he says, knowing audiences find content in a variety of ways. Yet, he doesn't want to simply churn out products. Rather, he strives to take on projects that he'd like to watch, and that he'd want to show his kids.

Their first animated feature film *The Breadwinner*, based on the eponymous book by Canadian author Deborah Ellis, is starting production. It tells the story of a young Afghan girl living under Taliban rule. And it's also the one with Jolie at the helm.

As an international co-production between Canada, Ireland and Luxembourg, the Academy Award-nominated Irish company Cartoon Saloon is creating all of the animations.

Back in the GTA, they're working on a TV series for Family Channel called *The Wonderful Wayneys*. It stars Jason Priestly and Molly Ringwald as the parents of a brood of multi-exceptional children. Although, their youngest kid is a bit of a black sheep; he's the mischievous one in a family of high-achievers. Rosen, who's a father of two, says this comedy will premiere in the spring of 2016.

Recently, Aircraft's horror comedy *Portal To Hell!!!*, by director Vivieno Caldinelli and writer Matt Watts, screened at the 40th annual Toronto International Film Festival as part of the Short Cuts series. This marked Rosen's third time at TIFF. He hopes to use the festival as a platform to develop *Portal* into a feature film.

Along with these more traditional platforms, Rosen and Leo are working with YouTube stars, such as the Epic Mealtime crew and Filipino Canadian Mikey Bustos, to develop potential TV series for the CBC's and the Canadian Film Centre's Screens Comedy Workshop.

Despite Rosen's impressive roster, he wasn't always focused on the film industry. He graduated from Montreal's McGill University with a bachelor of science in anatomy, but around the same time, he started volunteering at the Canadian Film Centre.

Without much formal training in film production, Rosen says his experience working at Jewish summer camps helps him on set. "A lot of the skills I learned at camp are very transferable to producing."

He moved through Canadian Young Judea camps, eventually becoming the program director at Biluim. "One thing I always bring up on set is the same thing we learned at camp," he says describing the concept of leadership by example. Rather than just staying in the office, he and Leo endeavour to get their hands dirty, working closely with their writers and their crew.

"There's only two of us," says Rosen of his production house. "And we just have to love what we work on. We just look for things that intrigue us because we know we're going to be living with it for a long time." ■

Bratislava excursion is not a disappointment

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, BRATISLAVA

The capital of Slovakia may best be described as tired. Whereas Prague in the Czech Republic – stitched together with Slovakia for 74 years, save for the Nazi period – is Bohemian hip, Bratislava looks Soviet-era grim, with blocky grey buildings and no shortage of graffiti.

Bratislava was included on our recent "Romantic Danube Jewish Heritage Tour" boat cruise, and some passengers were told by the cruise director that the city could be skipped. Apparently, there's not much Jewish to see here, so the on-board gossip went.

Those who took the excursion anyway were not disappointed.

There are two major sites to see, and one is memorable.

The first is the Slovak Holocaust Memorial, located in the centre of Bratislava's Old Town, on the site of the former Rybné Square synagogue, demolished in 1967.

"It survived World War II but not communism," says our plainly anti-communist guide.

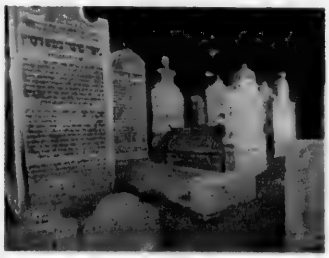
Erected in 1996 by the federal government to commemorate the country's roughly 75,000 Holocaust victims, it consists of two facing black walls with the silhouette of the destroyed synagogue, and is topped by a Star of David serving as a kind of shield. The word "remember" is etched into the granite base in Slovak and Hebrew.

I waited for our guide to remember Slovakia's role in the Holocaust. She didn't.

Slovakia seceded from what was then called Czechoslovakia in March 1939 and became a Nazi puppet under the leadership of the arch-fascist and anti-Semitic Josef Tiso, a Catholic priest. The country was the first Axis partner to consent to the deportation of its 90,000 Jews.

Between March and October 1942, Slovak gendarmes, military personnel and members of the feared Hlinka Guard rounded up some 58,000 Jews, put them in labour and concentration camps, and then turned them over to German authorities, who transported them to Auschwitz and other death mills.

That's important because it puts Slovakia in the odious company of those countries in which Jews were handed over to the Nazis from areas without any German occupation.



Rabbi Moshe Schreiber's grave (foreground) and other tombstones. RON CSILLAG PHOTO

That was the situation until 1944, when the Nazis marched in to quell an uprising against Tiso. A further 13,000 Jews were then deported. But the majority of Slovak Jews were hunted down by fellow Slovaks.

It's nothing to be proud of, but on our tour, it's not mentioned.

Now home to about 800 Jews, Bratislava was once a great Jewish centre. The tour's highlight confirms that.

The sign outside the Chatam Sofer Memorial reminds the visitor that it is a sacred space. The entrance, a door inside a grey box at the end of a long ramp, is innocuous enough. But down a flight of stairs, in a well-lit mausoleum, one finds 23 graves, including that of Bratislava's most famous rabbi, Moses Schreiber, who died in 1839. A towering figure in his day, he was known as the Chatam Sofer, the Seal of the Scribe.

This not a museum, we are told, but a hallowed graveyard – the sole remaining part of a centuries-old Jewish cemetery that was destroyed in 1943 when a raised roadway and tunnel were constructed. Fearing a curse if the rabbis' graves were demolished, pro-Nazi authorities (perhaps bribed) permitted only the most important section, the resting places of the prominent rabbis and scholars, to be preserved as an entombed shrine. Today, it attracts many Jewish pilgrims.

You may feel some spooky rumbling. There's a tram stop just above. ■

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Israeli app set to take Canadian universities by storm

DANIEL KOREN
dkoren@thecjn.ca

It's the start of October, and that means university campuses have been buzzing with the sound of students running from lecture halls to libraries to frat parties, before stumbling back to their dorm rooms in the middle of the night. But in the midst of all that hustle and bustle, these young academic minds also require sustenance. And quickly.

That's why across some 125 university campuses in the United States there's a new app on campus that's proven to be quite popular, one that's determined to save students time they could otherwise be using to study, socialize, or sleep: Tapingo.

The app is also slated to roll into Canada in January.

Tapingo is a free app that allows students to order food from their favourite places via their smartphones, so that when they arrive they can just pick it up from the counter without having to wait in line. The app eventually learns your preferences, so if you've ordered a non-fat, skim milk cappucino with extra foam and a dash of nutmeg from Starbucks two days in a row, it will remember your order and ask if you want it again the next day - which you likely will.

Payment is done via your phone so the transaction is seamless, smooth and effective, giving university students on the go that extra few minutes to relax before their tumultuous day begins. Daniel Almog, CEO of the Tel Aviv/San Francisco-based startup, explains that he and chief technology officer Udi Oster first came up with the idea in the most unlikeliest of places: while serving in the IDF's intelligence unit.

"It seemed odd to us that technology had improved so many aspects of daily life, yet the impact of these technological advances were so minimal when it came to buying - something we do every day," Almog explains to *The CJN*. "We knew there was massive potential to improve the buying experience, and that our success hinged on overcoming the obstacles faced by other players in this space."

After the app launched in Israel, Almog quickly saw there was a huge market available on American university campuses, which he refers to as a "densely populated closed ecosystem."

The company is planning to launch in Canadian universities starting with the University of Ottawa in January.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Tapingo's app lets you know how long you need to wait. At right is CEO Daniel Almog.

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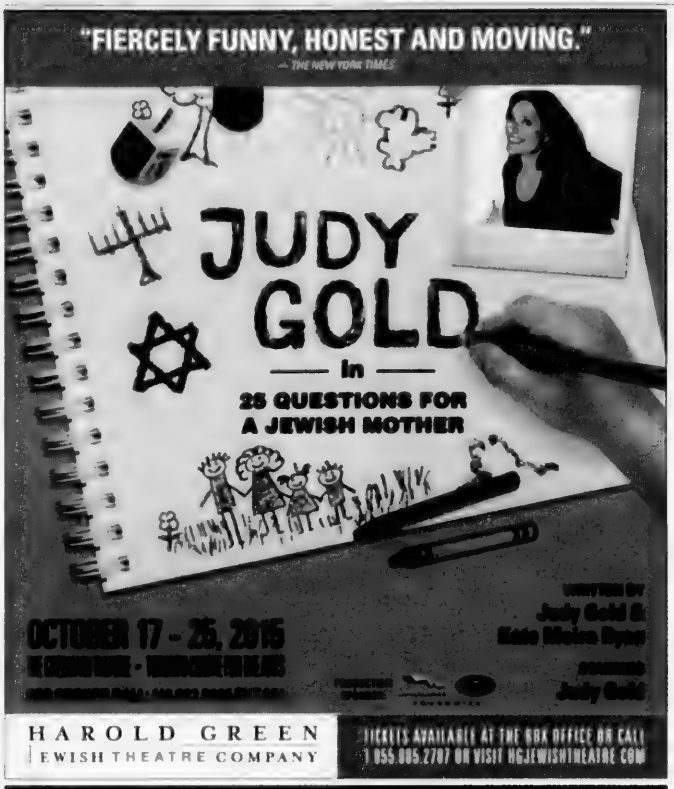
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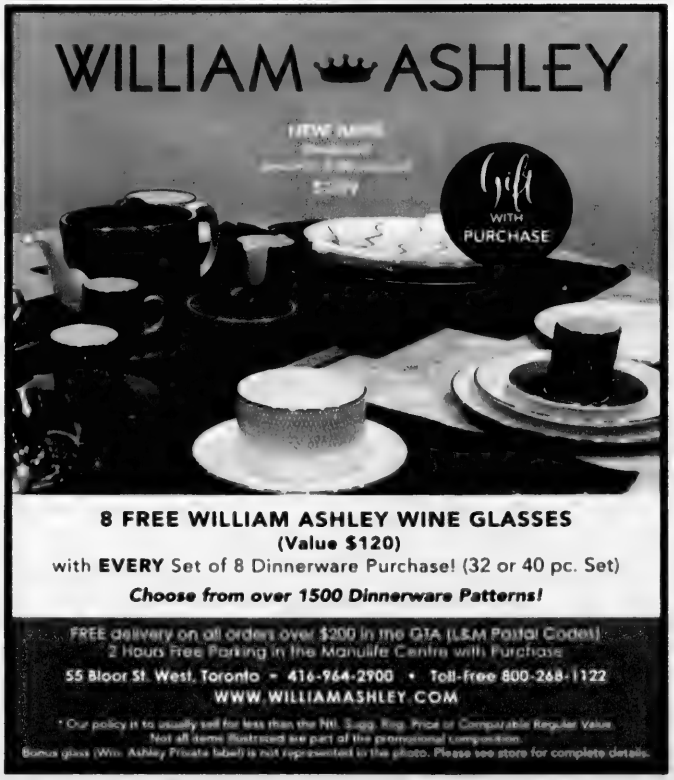
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Time-saving app will soon be launched in Canada

Students line up outside their university Starbucks.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"Our expansion into Canada is very exciting - and we're hosting a poutine night to celebrate," Almog says.

The company is currently in touch with other large universities in Canada. While the app will look similar from the consumer perspective, expanding into a new country gives Tapingo the opportunity to enhance their software capabilities to accommodate different currencies. "Et maintenant, nous parlons en français! Not really, but we did make the app available in Canadian French, as well as English," Almog says.

"Students are active, tech-savvy users whose needs are evolving," he says. "Tapingo's technology suits most obviously the lifestyle and demands of the college market, but increased convenience is desirable across all generations. We expect to see our technology adopted in other industries."

For the 2015/16 academic season, Tapingo launched several new features to ensure efficiency. First is Tapingo Delivers, an on-demand delivery service that will be staffed entirely by college students. Because deliveries will be primarily done on campus, Almog believes that students will be able to deliver three to four orders per hour. Like Uber, student-couriers can log in whenever they have free time and start making deliveries. "This empowers us to introduce entrepreneurship to students, who otherwise might not have exposure to this world, and helps us provide a superior service," Almog explains.

Other features the startup is rolling out include scheduled ordering - allowing you to schedule your lunch and coffee breaks around your classes - and quick picks, so that businesses aligned with Tapingo can note which items they carry are always immediately available. It's also launching Club Tapingo, which will create a community of Tapingo users and provide access to exclusive discounts and events.

> *Tapingo's technology suits most obviously the lifestyle and demands of the college market*

Last year, Tapingo's presence exploded on the university scene, seeing an average of 25,000 transactions a day. The company also received US$22 million in venture-capital funding. Naturally, many students went to social media platforms like Twitter to hail the app for making their lives easier, and providing them with more time for productivity. Understandably, the company received particular praise once they partnered with Starbucks. At the start of September, they partnered with another reputable brand, available for both pickup and delivery: Chipotle.

"Our users look to us to offer everything from local favourites to large national brands," Almog explains. "Which is what differentiates us from competitors."

Like a myriad of other successful startups, Almog explains why Israel has earned its reputation as the Startup Nation. "There is an active and prospering tech scene in Israel," he says. "The combination of a strong entrepreneurial spirit and talented engineering community is a recipe for success." ■

ProAm raises money for Israel Tennis Centers

From left, Israeli tennis champions Andy Ram, Jonathan Erlich and Harel Levy point to the ITC facilities on a map of Israel where they played growing up. They were joined at last year's ProAm by Canadian/American Davis Cup player Jesse Levine, right.

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Consider the following three names: Andy Ram, Jonathan Erlich and Harel Levy. What do they share in common?

If you answered they're all world class tennis players who competed for Israel, you're half right. For a more complete answer and full points in this *CJN* mini- quiz, you'd also have to answer that all three developed their skills, in part, at the Israel Tennis Centers (ITC) – Ram in Jerusalem, Erlich in Haifa and Levy in Ramat Hasharon.

For bonus points, you'd have to know that all three were in Toronto last year for a ProAm in support of the Israeli charity. This year's event, the 12th Invitational ProAm in support of Israel Tennis Centers, will feature the return of Ram and Levy. This time they'll be joined by Dean Goldfine, a highly regarded coach from Florida who has instructed former ATP Tour player Aaron Krickstein and Grand Slam champion Andy Roddick, and who was one of the coaches of the American team at the 2004 Olympics.

They'll be joined by a number of other local professionals and 32 amateurs who have ponied up a registration fee of $1,000 and raised another $800 in support of the ITC Foundation.

The event will take place on Sept. 19-20 at York Racquets Club and is in honour of the late Harold Green, a longtime supporter of Israel Tennis Centers and who, along with other Canadian supporters, raised the funds to build Canada Stadium, where Israel hosted Davis Cup and Fed Cup events.

The ProAm is an important day on the ITC fundraising calendar, said Toby Rosner, executive director of the ITC Foundation in Canada.

The amount raised varies from year to year but organizers expect to gross as much as $250,000 this year, she said. Add the money raised at this year's annual golf tournament (the numbers aren't in yet, but last year's total grossed $750,000), plus the sums expected to be raised at this year's JNF Negev Dinner, and 2015 is shaping up to be a big year for ITC in Canada, Rosner said.

The 2015 JNF dinner on Nov. 22 will honour Kevin Green and Joseph Frieberg "for their exemplary leadership in the Toronto Jewish community and for their lifelong support of the State of Israel."

Proceeds from the Negev campaign will be directed towards The Green/Frieberg Social Services Complex at the Samson ITC in Be'er Sheva.

Green and Frieberg are former international chairs of the ITC, an Israeli institution that is getting more and more recognition for the important work it does in promoting sport, helping youth at risk, fostering Arab-Jewish co-existence and empowering young women, said Rosner.

"It's not just about tennis," she continued. "It's about life. It's about creating champions in life. That's the goal. It's beyond tennis."

The ITC was founded in 1976 and is today considered one of the largest social service organizations for children in Israel. More than 20,000 Israeli youngsters participate in ITC programs every year at the ITC's 14 centres across the country.

Earlier this summer, ITC-trained Rotem Ashkenazi, 17, won the inaugural 2015 World Deaf Tennis Championships in Nottingham, England. The tournament featured deaf athletes from 20 countries.

Ashkenazi joined the ITC at age 12, training at the centre's high performance location in Ramat Hasharon. She is the only female deaf competitive tennis player in Israel and is a member of the ITC national girls team. ■

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Oil boom and bust, Galician style

NORMAN RAVVIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Peak Oil. Neil Young's condemnation of the environmental damage caused by the Alberta "Tar Sands." *The Leap Manifesto* on climate and energy policy. All this seems notably of our moment. But the challenges raised – the impact of petroleum discoveries on the economy, daily life and the environment – have an important mid-19th century Polish precedent.

It was in south-eastern Poland, not far from the Hungarian and Russian borders, that important discoveries associated with wax, petroleum, and distillation methods turned a semi-feudal, mostly rural landscape into one of the first oil economies of the modern era. By their great numbers and their peculiar status in 19th-century Polish society, Jews played a substantial role at all levels of this economic transformation.

The Jewish Oil Magnates of Galicia – a hybrid volume that includes a historical study by Valerie Schatzker and a translation of the 1954 Yiddish novel *The Jewish Oil Magnates* by Julien Hirszhaut – tells this story with verve and impressive detail.

Schatzker's historical portrait, covering roughly a century, acts as an introduction to Hirszhaut's novel. Both documents serve as careful studies of the impact and risks of modern resource economies, while presenting a clear-eyed portrait of eastern European Jewish life before World War II.

The Galician breakthroughs in resource development were sudden and far-reaching. The landscape in the shadow of the Carpathian Mountains had always oozed what were referred to as "oil seeps." These provided materials used in medicine, as lubricant, for the tanning of leather, and the production of soap and candles.

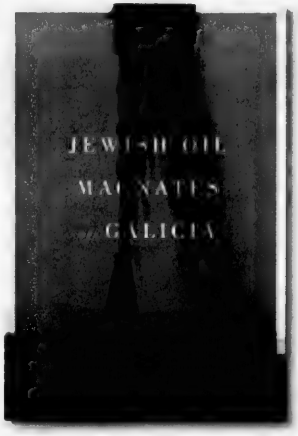
The first leap beyond this low-tech era followed the development of a market for *ozokerite*, a wax that proved an excellent and much less expensive alternative to beeswax for candle making. Mined in haphazardly dug and timbered shafts under the ground, wax was distilled by placing encrusted stones in vats of cold water, which were stirred with paddles. When the ozokerite rose to the surface it was skimmed and boiled in cauldrons over open fires. The recovered, purified wax provided a far cleaner, non-odorous, pleasantly white material for Sabbath candle-making and for the candles used in Russian Orthodox churches.

In the 1850s, a Galician pharmacist in Lemberg was among the first to successfully distil crude oil into naphtha, a "clear, odourless fuel for lamps." This technological advance led to the earliest installation of gas lamps on Drohobycz's streets, as well as to the first instance of a European railway using gas to illuminate its rail cars.

By 1875, shafts in the area of Boryslav, one of the key towns in south-eastern Poland, numbered in the thousands. Photographs of the area in this period are reminiscent of Standard Oil's Pennsylvania oil fields. Wooden derricks with their box-like caps, rough workers' shacks, haphazard fencing and roadways stretch as far as the eye can see.

A large Jewish underclass populated the wax-mining economy; independent Jewish owners sunk mines; while a number of "magnates" – *naft-magnatn* in Yiddish – lorded over newly made fortunes. They built mansions in nearby Drohobycz to escape the environmental disaster that befell Boryslav in the immediate area of derricks and mining.

As Schatzker tells it, mine fields became a kind of "Galician Hell": "Water run-off from the mines was left to wash away the soil, flood the low-lying areas, turn roads and fields to mud, and cause houses in the towns to sink below the street level. Boardwalks had to be built to pass over ditches filled with stinking, rotting refuse, so that pedestrians could navigate the streets."



The Jewish Oil Magnates of Galicia
A History, 1853-1945 by Valerie Schatzker and a Novel by Julien Hirszhaut
McGill-Queen's UP

In the following decades came an all-out oil boom, which reached its height in the years before World War I. From each shift in the petroleum industry came new forms of labour; new depths of environmental damage; new attractions for local and international investors; new unpredictability associated with the boom and its inevitable bust.

Hirszhaut's novelistic treatment of these developments is well matched to Schatzker's meticulous historical introduction. Following the model of epic Yiddish novels of the early 20th century, Hirszhaut depicts the full transformation of the Galician economy and its major towns in the second half of the 19th century. His characters represent all rungs of the social ladder, from the bottom – the *lepaks* who, digging in ditches, would "scoop out the thicker layer of oil with pails and then sponge the shallow layers with bunches of grasses or reeds" – to the magnates at the top. In scenes set in their Drohobycz mansions, magidim and paupers mix with social workers, mayors' deputies, and Polish landowning gentry.

Hirszhaut's ability to present his narrative convincingly comes in part from his own youth in Drohobycz and his later studies in law and politics in nearby Lvov (called Lemberg in his novel). Before the war he wrote for a variety of Yiddish and Polish language publications. He spent the early war years in hiding in Warsaw until he was captured and found himself in the Germans' notorious Pawiak prison. After the war he helped rebuild the postwar Yiddish press as well as social services in Lodz, Bialystok, Katowice, Krakow, Lublin and Warsaw. Hirszhaut was among the first to collect survivors' testimonies in postwar Poland. In the 1950s he settled in New York where he remained a key Yiddish journalist and editor. He died in 1983.

The original Yiddish novel, *Yidishe Nafi-Magnatn*, appeared in the same Buenos Aires-based series devoted to postwar Yiddish writing that included an early version of Elie Wiesel's *Night*. Though Hirszhaut's book is not related to Holocaust writing, its publication in 1954 was part of the series' goal of recovering writings and documents associated with Polish Jewish culture and society. Reading the novel today is akin to sitting in a time machine. Galician forests, the Boryslaw Klondike, Drohobycz millionaires, the distant Vienna court of the Hapsburg emperor, the great chassidic courts and the rising enlightenment ideals of the maskilim inhabit Hirszhaut's novel, distinct and ghostly at the same time. ■

Norman Ravvin is a writer and teacher in Montreal.

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AGO Art Gallery of Ontario

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Adath Israel Congregation

Thursday, Oct. 8 at 7:30 p.m.

Featuring
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Gillian McIntyre
Maia-Mari Sutnik
Maxine Granofsky Gluskin

Wednesday, Oct. 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Gary Kenzer
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Golf pro humbled by his success

Russell Budd

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Every day, Russell Budd wakes up and finds himself face to face with his career goals. Written on Post-it notes, the goals are everywhere: plastered on doors and stuck to the bathroom mirror. To him, they serve as both reminder and reinforcement.

"If you keep telling yourself something and you see it often enough, you start to believe it," Budd says. "It starts to become reality."

The notices are necessary. The Toronto native is in his second year as a professional golfer and knows that becoming complacent for even a few days could have major repercussions for his career.

"It's a humbling sport," he says. "You can't get too high, you can't get too low. You have to figure out and find the positive in every disappointment."

Budd, 24, had to make a big mental adjustment in July after almost losing his grip on a tournament lead. He led by three strokes going into the second of a two-day contest at the Mandarin Golf and Country Club in Richmond Hill, Ont. However, a bogey and double bogey on the last two holes forced a playoff round with two other golfers.

Nevertheless, he persevered for his first professional win. That victory began a great season for Budd who took home his next first-place finish on Aug. 5 at another Mandarin Tour event in Richmond Hill.

Later that month, he shot a 69 at a qualifier for the PGA Tour Canada.

"I'm ahead of where I thought I would be at this time," he admits. "I feel very comfortable with myself and I'm enjoying what I'm doing, which is the biggest thing."

Regardless, there is no room for Budd to become too confident with his abilities. Unlike athletes in other sports, Budd cannot deflect to a teammate if he is having an off day. All of the blame falls on him, he says, so self-motivation is key.

Budd, who attended DePaul University on a golf scholarship and graduated in 2013, says that writing down his feelings is a helpful tool. If he is struggling during a round, he says he can think back to positive thoughts he scribbled down.

For instance, if he makes a note that humming a certain song in his head will make him feel better, Budd will use that to get him out of a funk on the course.

"Once you're out there in a tournament, your emotions can't be like a roller- coaster. You have to keep it pretty flat," he says. "I'm learning how to do that better."

To keep his game in tip-top shape through the year, Budd spends the winter golfing in southern Florida. There, he hits the course for practice at 7 a.m. and doesn't return home until the evening.

Budd says that if he returns to his residence and doesn't feel exhausted, he didn't push himself far enough.

"The good thing about this year is I've had to change my goals three times over the course of the last month," Budd says. "It's a good problem to have when you have to change goals because you're achieving them."

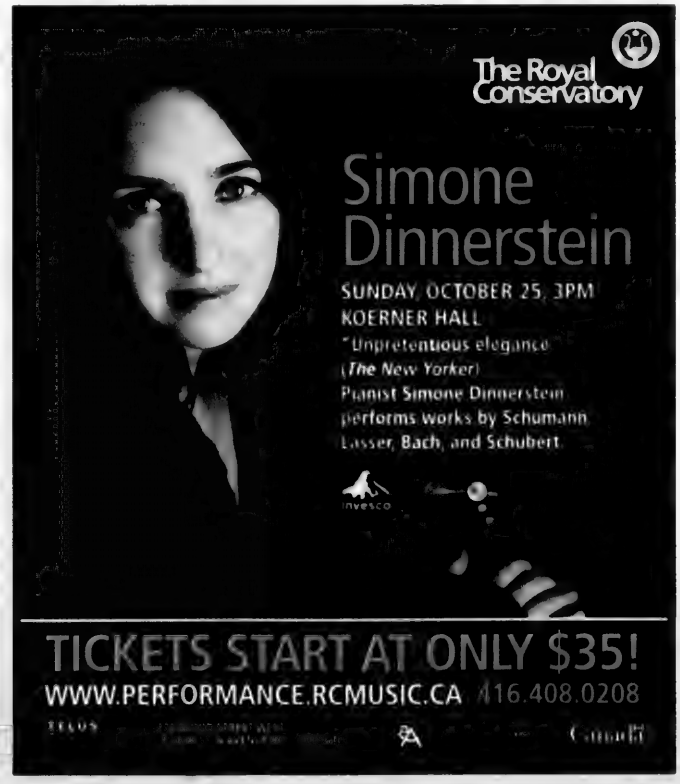
As for his next goals, Budd says he wants to keep his status with the PGA Tour Latinoamérica. Meanwhile, good tournament results will also help him keep his career afloat financially.

However, tournament entry fees can be pricey – especially for qualifying school, where Budd plays to qualify for top golf tours. Several of those entry fees can run upward of $2,000.

Budd has one sponsor, condo developer Camrost-Felcorp, and is currently looking for more sponsorship as his game improves. He estimates that his annual expenses are between $75,000 and $80,000 (US).

While the sport is an expensive endeavour, Budd remains confident that he will continue hitting and putting for life.

"I wouldn't even know what to do with a desk job," he says. "I hope I never have to wear a suit to go to work. I like being able to go somewhere with a bunch of grass and where the sun is shining every single day." ■



Wrestling our way into the new year

Evelyn Tauben

This can be a complicated time of year for Jews. The High Holidays are filled with possibility, liveliness and people coming together, but also with struggle, and not just the kind of soul-searching and grappling inherent in the Days of Awe.

In recent weeks, many have found themselves sitting inside a synagogue they rarely go to and reading words they barely understand, let alone believe in. All this comes as our work lives get back into gear after the lull of summer, and our children begin the first days of school. Meetings are being set, projects are beginning, and then we pull out of it all. These decisions do not come easy for so many of us who straddle two worlds, leaving more than a few cynically questioning: what do I do it for? What do I actually want? What do I believe in?

Rabbi Brian Besser teaches that skepticism is a kind of prayer, noting that "Israel" means "one who struggles with God." The name of Israel is proclaimed in the Bible for the first time when Jacob wrestles with a stranger. Before releasing his grasp, Jacob insists on receiving a blessing, to which the stranger responds: "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings divine and human, and have prevailed" (Genesis 32:29).

For centuries, this iconic biblical story has been fodder for artists such as Rembrandt, Eugene Delacroix and Paul Gauguin. In Toronto, we have a remarkable sculpture of this scene by the distinguished Jewish artist Nathan Rapoport, best known for his striking memorial to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in Warsaw and also at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

In the Toronto sculpture, Rapoport compresses the events of the night-long struggle into a single, stirring moment. In the same gesture in which the two figures wrestle, the angel benevolently reaches out an imposing hand over Jacob's head, subtly making the priestly sign of the kohanim with fingers parted, foreshadowing Jacob receiving his blessing.

The intensity of the action is contained in the embracing, curving sweep of the angel's wings. There is both a solidity and lightness to Rapoport's distinct handling of the subject, with the angel hovering overhead and Jacob bracing himself against a rocky surface. Although the artists mentioned above, working in two dimensions, were free from the limitations of gravity to represent the story in any way their imaginations would allow, they all depicted scenes with both figures locked in a close grip, firmly grounded on land. The viewer bears witness to a tense, intimate battle.

By contrast, the openness of Rapoport's composition provides an opening for the viewer to see himself within the action. To my knowledge, Rapoport's circular design in conceiving of this biblical narrative is highly unique. The structure is reminiscent of the emphasis placed on circularity at this time in the Jewish calendar, when we take stock of circling through another year, and measure the continuity of life and the seasons. The viewer is drawn into the exchange between the struggling figures, and the open form and dynamic movement in Rapoport's sculpture connects us to the surroundings. Through it, we see trees, passing people and the activity of a community, and are reminded of our place within the struggle.

***Jacob Wrestling the Angel* (1977) by Nathan Rapoport (b. 1911, Warsaw – d. 1987, New York) is located on the Sherman Campus of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.**

> *The openness of Rapoport's composition provides an opening for the viewer to see himself within the action*

Rapoport once stated that the statue symbolizes the Jewish People committed to fighting for their destiny. At this time of year, when many of us are confronted with a fundamental conflict of how to be Jewish in a modern world, here is a reminder – an endorsement even – that skepticism and struggling to find a place within Jewish customs and community is the kind of resistant engagement that our tradition embraces. The melding of both wrestling and embrace that Rapoport has captured in his enduring work of art demonstrates how passionate affection and contentious conflict can appear similar, and are often experienced in a symbiotic relationship. Wrestling with tradition implies a fond connection to it.

May 5776 be filled with nourishing struggle! ■

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The Socialite

Orit Tobe, immediate past national president, Etty Danzig, past national president, Vivian Riesler, national executive vice president

Samantha Wynne, Ruth Rotman and Sarah Beutel Morgan

Doris Wexler Charow and Lisa Charow Jay

Helen Erlich, Judy Franco, Magda Gardner and Sabina Razmov

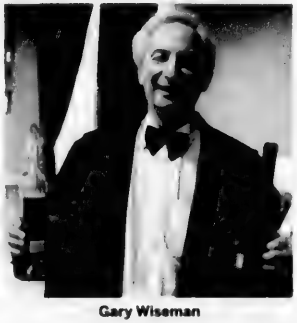
National president Sarah Beutel Morgan and MPP Monte Kwinter

Landmark achievement

Ninety years of volunteerism in Canada is worth honouring and that's what this gala did, celebrating Na'amat's 90 years, Club Masada's 70 years and Club Beersheba's 60 years. Club Masada is still very active with all members in their 90s and Club Beersheba's members in their 80s. Although one should never ask or divulge a woman's age, you go girls! Liberal MPP Monte Kwinter presented special certificates on behalf of the Minister of Citizenship and congratulated Na'amat members for more than 2,000 collective years of volunteering. ■

The Socialite

Sally Eisner and Lori Nusbaum



Gary Wiseman

Susan Inhaber, Karen Rose and Vivian Reisler

Florence Lazar

Pearl Mekler

Dorothy Feldman and Heather Freed

The Socialite wants your photos. Email thesocialite@thecjn.ca for submission details.

What's New

OCT. 1 - OCT. 8

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Oct. 1

BOOK CLUB

Elaine Newton reviews *The Children Act*, by **Ian McEwan**, Temple Emanu-El, dessert at 1 p.m., review at 1:30 p.m. $10.

YIDDISH VINKL

Hindy Nosek-Abelson discusses the challenges of translating Yiddish songs into English, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St., noon. $20, includes lunch.

Saturday, Oct. 3

JUDAISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Gideon Forman discusses "How Judaism influences future environmental solutions," during Shabbat services at Beth Emeth Synagogue.

SHABBAT AT THE BARNS

Leo Baeck Day School, Holy Blossom Temple and PJ Library present a family Shabbat singalong at Wychwood Barns, 76 Wychwood Ave., 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, Oct. 4

SUKKOT CELEBRATIONS

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds a family Sukkot festival, Oct. 4, 10 a.m. RSVP 416-385-3910.

Beth Avraham Yoseph Congregation of Toronto (BAYT) holds a family Sukkot carnival, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 7

CURRENT EVENTS

Murray Armel discusses current events at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Six-week program starts today, 10 a.m.

BIBLICAL DAY TRIPS

Hana Werner discusses "Queen of Sheba: A woman of intrigue and politics," dessert at 1:30, lecture at 2 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. $60 for 10 sessions/$10 at the door. RSVP 416-781-3511.

Deadline reminders:

Deadlines will change for the holidays. The deadline for the issue of Oct. 15 is Oct. 1. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

DAVID BALE PHOTO

Tashlich time

Middle school students at Leo Baeck Day School's north campus gathered at Oakbank Pond in Thornhill for a Tashlich ceremony led by Rabbi Noam Katz, dean of Jewish living, and Irith Rosen, the school's Hebrew co-ordinator.

Thursday, Oct. 8

POWERFUL PHOTOGRAPHY

Adath Israel Congregation presents a panel discussing "The enduring power of photography and the presentation of difficult topics," based on the AGO exhibit of photos of life in the Lodz Ghetto, 7:30 p.m. $15/$20. To register, visit www.adathisrael.com

A NEW LENS ON ISRAEL

Rabbi Michael Dolgin discusses Israel in three seminars, today, Oct. 15, 22, Temple Sinai at 7 p.m.

WORDS FROM THE STREET

Ve'ahavta and the Toronto Writers Collective showcase the writing of marginalized people, University of Toronto, Galbraith building, room 244, 35 St. George St., 7-9 p.m.

THE STORY OF THE BEATLES

Mike Daley discusses the story and music of the Beatles, Temple Har Zion, 8 p.m., $5/$8.

Coming Events

CHILDREN OF SURVIVORS

Baycrest and the Miles Nadal JCC offer support groups for adult children of Holocaust survivors. Call **Shoshana Yaakobi**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2271, or email syaakobi@baycrest.org

FALL CLASSES

Maccabi Canada's volleyball program for children age 9 to 16 starts Oct. 19/20. Call 416-398-0515, ext. 204 or email michele@maccabicanada.com

Morasha adult classes, taught by **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, Seymour Epstein** and **Rabbi Roy Tanenbaum.** Fall session starts Oct. 14. All classes at Beth Emeth Synagogue. Call 416-789-7400.

Temple Sinai offers Hebrew classes for 'beginners plus,' starting Oct. 6 and intermediates starting Oct. 1. Call 416-487-4161.

Temple Har Zion offers beginner and advanced beginner Hebrew classes, Thursday nights. www.templeharzion.com

Pride of Israel Synagogue offers conversational ulpan Hebrew with **Yael Lev** for beginners (must read Hebrew), intermediate, and advanced levels. Daytime or evening classes. Free learn to read Hebrew. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

Israeli dancing for beginners and intermediates starts this fall Sunday evenings at Temple Kol Ami. Email mayat.cohen@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Jewish Teen Philanthropy Board of Greater Toronto is looking for teens in grades 9-11 interested in making a difference in the community. Call **Aron** 416-635-2883, ext. 5238 or akatz@ujafed.org

Volunteers needed to sell poppies Oct. 30-Nov. 11 in the Bathurst Street and St. Clair Avenue area for the Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch. Email sgs823@sympatico.ca

Volunteer drivers needed once a month to drive vision impaired seniors to social events. Call **Sheila** 905-731-9667.

LEGAL SUPPORT FOR WOMEN

Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org

LECTURE SERIES

Temple Emanu-El's lecture series begins Oct. 19, 2-4 p.m., with **Iain Scott** discussing "The four greatest scenes in opera." Other presenters include **Dr. Geoff Fernie, Dr. Carolyn Harris, Dr. Colleen Carney, Mike Daley.** $45/ series; $15/lecture. 416-449-3880.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Lunch and Learn at Beth Tikvah Congregation starts Oct. 13, with **Jason Applebaum** and **Rabbi Jarod Grover** discussing "From the view of a recovered problem gambler." Must RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

BE THE MATCH
Adath Israel Congregation holds a stem cell and bone marrow clinic, Oct. 25, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

BOOK CLUB
Heather Kassel discusses "Genius and eccentricity as seen in the movies, *Mr. Turner, The Theory of Everything* and *The Imitation Game.*" (Movies not shown on review night). Oct. 20, 8 p.m. at Adath Israel Synagogue. $50/$85 for the 6-session series; $10/$15 per review. **Beverley** 416-499-6920.

VENDORS WANTED
Temple Har Zion is looking for vendors for its market, Oct. 25. Call **Ronni** 905-889-2252.

SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE
Associated Hebrew Schools holds an open house Oct. 18, at Posluns Education Centre, 18 Neptune Dr., at 10 a.m.; at Associated Cedarvale, Beth Sholom Synagogue, 1445 Eglinton Ave. W. at 3 p.m. RSVP pgreenspan@ahschools.com

Oct. 27 at Kamin Education Centre, 300 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill, at 7:30 p.m. RSVP mkomlos@ahschools.com

LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS
Chai Branch of National Council for Jewish Women invites women over 50 to join. 416-633-5100.

The Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch, Ladies Auxiliary, is looking for women who have had a spouse, parents, or grandparents in the armed forces to join. Call **Eva Kay** 905-886-5119.

SPOUSAL BEREAVEMENT GROUPS
Baycrest Terraces/Wagman Centre offers a spousal bereavement group for men and women over 55 starting in October. **Shawn Fremeth,** 416-785-2500, ext. 2986.

Adath Israel Congregation offers bereavement support groups for widows, Oct. 15-Nov. 19, 1 -3 p.m.; for men and women Oct. 20-Nov. 24, 7:30 p.m. Free for members, $180 for non-members. **Nilly** 416-635-5340.

JF&CS

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**,416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

◗ **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Swing dance classes with **Kris Light,** Oct. 13-Dec. 1. Dance lesson at 11 a.m., social dance at noon. No experience or partner needed.

Temma Gentles discusses her "Torah Stitch by Stitch," project, Oct. 1, 1:30 p.m.

Eve Goldberg sings the music of Simon and Garfunkel, Oct. 8, 1:30 p.m. Register 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or email lisar@mnjcc.org.

◗ **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and Ping-Pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9.

Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.

Exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges. Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org

◗ **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Oct. 8, lecture on "Your feet, your health," 1:30 p.m.; Book club meets Tuesdays at 1 p.m.

◗ **Association of Jewish Seniors** holds a Sukkot lunch, Oct. 1, noon, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. Guest speaker **Stephen Adler,** Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. $20/$25. Must pre-register 416-635-2900, ext. 458.

◗ **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Bridge, partners required, Tuesdays, noon; Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; Bring your knitting and needlepoint and relax Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.; Casino Woodbine Oct. 14.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

◗ JCC players, after-school musical theatre program starts Oct. 7, 6:30 p.m.
◗ Music for babies and toddlers starts Oct. 15, 10 a.m.
◗ Sports with Jay, parent and tots, starts Oct. 18, 10 a.m.
◗ Screening of the film, *Sturgeon Queens,* Oct. 20 at noon.
◗ Beginner mah-jong starts Oct. 7, 10:30 a.m.
◗ "A Taste of Jazz," presented by the Royal Conservatory of Music, Tuesdays, Nov. 3-17, 1- 3 p.m.
◗ **Osnat Lippa** presents "Celebrating women artists," starting Oct. 13, 1 p.m.
◗ Bridge level 1 starts Oct. 8 at 10 a.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

◗ *Defending the Caveman,* a comedy about how men and women relate to each other, previews Oct. 1, 2; performances Oct. 3, 9, 10 at 8 p.m. www.thecaveman.ca
◗ *Passages,* mixed media by **Alice Vander Vennen** is in the gallery Oct. 3-28. Opening reception Oct. 4, 4-6 p.m.
◗ The gallery is looking for an Israeli visual artist for March 2016. Submissions close Nov. 1. Contact deannad@mnjcc.org
◗ Spadina synagogue walk, Oct. 4, 9:30 a.m. RSVP: principal@djcs.org
◗ Shabbat family party, spaces still available, Fridays, 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Email anniem@mnjcc.org.
◗ *The Mask You Live in:* Screening and panel discussion about how boys and young men negotiate masculinity, Oct. 7, 7 p.m. Free but participants must pre-register, www.algreentheatre.ca
◗ Wheel dance: learn Latin dance in a mixed abilities class. Oct. 18- Dec. 6, 6 p.m. liviyam@mnjcc.org or ext. 330.
◗ From tummies to mummies: Pre- and post-natal bootcamp, aquafit and yoga classes. Call ext. 567.
◗ Register now for Hebrew and Yiddish classes starting Oct. 13. Call ext. 388 or anniem@mnjcc.org
◗ Intro to ASL I is a beginners' class introducing American Sign Language, Oct. 7- Nov. 25, 7 p.m.
◗ Social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Call ext. 330.
◗ **Osnat Lippa** discusses the art of Degas, Oct. 19, 26, 1:30 p.m.
◗ Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

◗ When spirituality meets science: Neuroscience reveals the power of meditation, Oct. 14, 7 p.m.
◗ PJ Plus is a parent/tot program for children ages 18 months to 3 years. Sundays, starts Oct. 18, 10 a.m.
◗ Find your creative voice with **Sadko Hadzihasanovic,** Oct. 13-Dec. 15, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
◗ Royal Conservatory of Music presents "The enigma of Russian music," Oct. 20, 7 p.m.
◗ Daytime or evening beginner mah-jong classes start the week of Oct. 8.
◗ Bridge level 1 starts Oct. 7, 7 p.m. ■

www.cjnews.com

ASK ELLA

An empty nest means you've done it right

Ella Burakowski
eb@thecjn.ca

Dear Ella,

A few weeks ago, my husband and I drove our son to McGill University in Montreal. On our drive home, we discussed how happy we were to have finally reached a stage where both boys are in university.

Now that it has sunk in and my husband is off to work every day, I am finding myself moping around, constantly depressed. The house is too quiet. When I open the front door, there is no one playing guitar, no music blaring, no mess, no negotiations about the car, and no one expecting dinner. I never thought I would feel so empty.

I'm very happy for both my sons, but this empty nester thing is truly for the birds. How am I going to move on from feeling so lost and not needed?

Sadly Alone at Last

Dear Sadly Alone at Last

Having your last child leave home opens up a whole barrage of emotions. Everything from joy, relief and well-deserved pride for having done a great job as a parent, to sadness, worry and loneliness. You have entered a new stage in your life, and you need to allow yourself time to adjust. This is also a new phase as a parent, as a wife and as an individual.

You've raised your boys with the hopes of getting them to this milestone. You've given them the tools they need to become productive, self-sufficient adults, and now it's time to let go and let them put all the life skills you have instilled to work.

You probably put your family's needs above your own, and it will take time and action to re-adjust that thought process and fill the void with things that continue to make you feel fulfilled. You could volunteer, go back to work, take some courses, join a book club, travel, join a health club, revive or start a hobby, go out on dates with your husband, get a dog, take up golf – the list is endless.

Remember: your boys are not gone for good, and believe me, they still need you and always will. Allow yourself time to make this new adjustment.

Try to plan your week in advance. In the beginning, you might be lunching a lot with friends you never had time for in the past, but eventually you will want to remake yourself and find the new right fit.

Remember that your sons are always accessible. You can reach out by phone, text, FaceTime, Facebook or even visits. You've done a wonderful job as a parent, now it's your turn, embrace this new transition.

Dear Ella,

I have three children, 9, 6 and 4. My baby started all-day junior kindergarten this week. My full-time job as a mom has abruptly come to an end.

Usually, when the bus picks up the older boys, my daughter and I begin our full day of activities, but when I waved good-bye to her this morning, my heart sank down to the pit of my stomach. I spent so much time preparing her for this moment, but I never thought about what it would do to me.

I jumped in my car and chased the bus, only to find her getting off at the other end seeming quite content. She wasn't in tears, but I was! I cried all the way home. I should be happy, not miserable.

Baby in School

Dear Baby in School

Relinquishing the care of your last baby to someone else, a virtual stranger, is certainly traumatic, and there is no reason to trivialize it. However, your job as a full-time mom has not abruptly come to an end, it has simply changed.

You just went from being needed every waking moment to an empty house for a few hours with time for your own thoughts and the luxury of making your own schedule without a kid hanging off of you. Your feelings are real and natural, and you have to allow yourself the time to work through them – time to grieve your old routine so you can create a new one that's just as productive.

You've done a great job as a mom in the last nine years raising your little miracles to go into the world. Although it's a difficult change for you, it's also a good one. Time to add another layer to your already accomplished, full life.

But remember: you only have a few hours until that school bus arrives and your house is full of kids once again, all shouting mommy and needing you like they were never gone. ■

Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

Mazel Tov!

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Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Parshah

Sukkot | Exodus 33:12-34:26

Rabbi Ilan Acoca says we must act as living examples for our future generations
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl explains why rain is God's way of keeping us honest
Rabbi Catharine Clark argues that the Torah is not meant to be comfortable reading

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

As we approach Simchat Torah every year, I have mixed feelings.

On the one hand, my heart is filled with joy and a sense of accomplishment!

Another year has passed by, and we are ready to finish a cycle of Torah and restart it again with songs and tunes of our Sephardi chachamim. Being the only Sephardi congregation west of Toronto gives me a sense of responsibility as well. Here we are being part of Am Israel, continuing an ancient tradition.

On the other hand, I feel concerned and a little nervous. I am thinking about the future. Will these traditions be preserved by the next generation? Am I doing enough to guarantee it?

A couple of years ago, I had a visitor from out of town who happened to be an accomplished lay leader in the Sephardi community where he lives. I had the chance to share with him my concerns about the future of Sephardi Judaism and he gave me wise advice. He said: "Continue what you are doing! Teach and propagate, and the rest is up to God."

The day after I got his advice happened to be Shabbat, and my son Nissim Shalom, who was eight years old at that time, read the Haftorah, as is traditional in Sephardi communities.

After the reading, I invited the Sephardi leader to share some words. He started by saying, "Your rabbi is concerned about the future of Sephardi Judaism, but after such a beautiful Haftorah reading by his son, I assure him there is a bright future for Sephardi Judaism."

His words warmed my heart and gave me a sense of comfort, inspiration and mission.

Let us all take this message to heart and teach by being living examples to our future generations. ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

Rain occupies the thoughts of Jews at this season. We go outside to our sukkot, the huts that remind us of our historic trek through the wilderness and the need for shelter, hoping that there will be no rain. Paradoxically, we take the four plants that symbolize agricultural fertility – lulav (palm), hadas (myrtle), aravah (willow) and etrog (citron) – and circle the synagogue with the *Hoshanot* prayers for rain and fecundity. The holiday season culminates with Shmini Atzeret (Simchat Torah is a later addition to the sacred calendar) with the piyyut (poem) noting the change to the rainy season in the Land of Israel and our prayer that the winter months ahead be blessed with wet weather.

In her evocative exploration *Rain*, Cynthia Barnett writes of the atmospheric balance that differentiates Earth from the other planets. Rain was essential to the birth of life and is basic to its ongoing sustenance. She speculates that climatic conditions gave rise to different religious outlooks. Certainly, for Judaism and other monotheistic religions born in the arid Middle East, "Rain is God's way of keeping us honest."

The striking image of the sukkah reminds us, as do all the pilgrimage festivals, of the specific covenant of the Jewish People with God. We celebrate the particular elements of our identities as Jews. But the lulav and etrog, associated with natural growth, remind us that the entire world depends on an adequate supply of water. On Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, we speak of the special love between God and the people of Israel. We also pray for the blessing of rain. As Rabbi Tanhum bar Hiyya taught (midrash on Psalms 117), "The giving of Torah gives joy to the people of Israel; the falling of rain brings joy to the entire world." Our covenantal love is secure enough to share our blessings with others. ■

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto.

Rabbi Catharine Clark

Like many people, when I'm busy at work or feeling overwhelmed as a parent, I turn to a comfort food. Grilled cheese sandwiches are my favourite, but everyone has their own go-to dish. Often, I also turn to a "comfort book." An example would be any book from the Harry Potter series. They have a happy ending, and they are predictable, especially to me, because I've read them countless times before.

At Simchat Torah, as we finish Dvarim and roll back the scroll to begin again at Bereshit, it can be tempting to read the Torah as a comfort book. After all, we have read the Torah many times. We read it each year, and many of you have heard the key stories since childhood. These early stories are important formative experiences, but age-appropriate tellings of the Torah mean that many themes have been glossed over or omitted entirely.

Our task as adults is to read the Torah not as a comfort book, but as a challenge book. A challenge book is one that tests the boundaries of your comprehension, life values or behavioural comfort zone.

Pushing the boundaries of your comprehension could mean reading the weekly parshah in Hebrew, rather than English. To clarify your values, perhaps pay particular attention to the stories of the patriarchs and matriarchs that did not make the Talmud Torah curriculum. For instance, in Genesis Chapter 12, read about the proposition Abram made to his wife Sarai. How desperate would your situation have to be before you would propose or accept a similar deal? To expand your behavioural comfort zone, volunteer at your synagogue to chant Torah on Shabbat or at weekday minyan. Yes, you might be very nervous that morning, but the Torah is not meant to be a comfort book. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom in London, Ont.

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Easy desserts to sweeten your holiday meal

EILEEN GOLTZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When you have a small someone in the household who wants to help you prepare dessert, the easiest thing to make is a dump cake.

First, let me say the moniker is at once brilliant and misleading, and kind of fun. You literally dump your ingredients, in layers, into a bowl or pan and bake it.

Cake mix, fruit or flavour, a fat, sometimes chocolate or nuts, and whatever your taste buds fancy. The extra bonus is that family members of all ages (and cooking expertise) can participate in the prep for the holidays.

Peachy strawberry dump cake

- ❑ 2 cups frozen sliced strawberries, thawed with juices
- ❑ 2 cups frozen sliced peaches, thawed with juices
- ❑ 1 box strawberry cake mix
- ❑ 1 stick butter or margarine, melted

For the glaze

- ❑ 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- ❑ 3 tbsp. whipping cream or rice milk

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a 9 x13-in. baking pan. Pour fruit and juices into the prepared pan. Pour the box of cake mix over the fruit. Pour the melted butter over the cake mix and bake for 25 to 35 minutes, until it becomes golden and bubbly. Remove and let cool for 10 minutes before drizzling the glaze over the top

To make glaze: In a bowl, combine the powdered sugar and cream and mix until smooth. Drizzle the glaze over the top of the cake. Serves 10 to 12.

Marshmallow apple pie spice dump cake

- ❑ 1 box spice cake mix
- ❑ 10 oz bag of mini marshmallows
- ❑ 1 can of apple pie filling
- ❑ 1 stick of melted butter or margarine

Preheat oven to 350. In a greased 9 x13-in. baking pan spread the can of apple pie filling evenly across bottom of the pan. Sprinkle the cake mixture evenly over the pie filling. Shake the pan slightly so the cake mixture spreads evenly over the filling. Pour the melted butter evenly over the cake mix. Some clumping will happen, this is okay, don't worry about it. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove immediately and sprinkle the mini-marshmallows over the top of the cake. Turn up the oven to broil and place the cake in the oven for no more than 30 to 45 seconds. Watch it closely as it will burn. Remove from the oven immediately and let cool for 5 minutes before serving. Serves 8 to 10.

Chocolate cherry dump cake

- ❑ 1 can cherry pie filling
- ❑ 1 can pitted dark sweet cherries
- ❑ 1 package chocolate cake mix
- ❑ 1 cup chopped pecans
- ❑ 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- ❑ 3/4 cup butter or margarine, cut into pieces

Preheat oven to 375. Grease a 9x13-in. baking dish. Dump the cherry pie into the pan and spread it evenly over the bottom of the pan. Spoon the cherries, including juice over the top of the filling. Sprinkle the cake mix over the top of the fruit. Don't stir, just shake the pan a bit to make sure the cake is evenly distributed over the fruit. Sprinkle the chopped pecans and chocolate chips over the top. Dot the butter pieces evenly over the top. Bake for 45 minutes. Serves 10 to 12.

Salt caramel chocolate dump cake

- ❑ 1 small package instant chocolate pudding
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups cold milk
- ❑ 1 box devil's food cake mix
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups chopped caramels
- ❑ coarse sea salt for sprinkling
- ❑ 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- ❑ whipped cream, for serving (optional)

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a 9 x 13-in. pan and set aside.

In a large bowl combine the chocolate pudding and milk. Mix for 1 minute. Add the cake mix and mix until combined. Spread batter evenly over the bottom of prepared pan (it will be very thick). Sprinkle the chopped caramels over the top and then sprinkle the sea salt (not too much) on top of the caramel. Bake 30 to 40 minutes, just until the edges pull away from sides and a toothpick inserted in the cake portion comes out clean.

Remove cake from oven and let cool on a cooling rack.

Pour chocolate chips into a medium microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on high for 2-3 minutes, stirring every 30 seconds, until chocolate is fully melted. Using a spoon, drizzle chocolate over cooled cake. Serves 10 to 12. ■

Rabbi Paysach Krohn: become a giving person

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Rabbi Paysach Krohn, a New York-based fifth-generation mohel was 21 when he became the youngest mohel ever certified. He is the author of 12 books, eight of which are part of a series that feature stories and anecdotes inspired by Rabbi Sholom Schwadron, a man known as the "Maggid of Jerusalem," and a lecturer on the subjects of ethics and spiritual growth. He spoke to *The CJN* in advance of his Sept. 20 lecture in Toronto, sponsored by Eitz Chaim Day School and held at Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation in Thornhill.

What message are you bringing with you to the Toronto Jewish community?

I'm speaking about the act of giving. I'm talking about repentance during the period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and how we can improve ourselves.

I think one of the most important things is that every Jew should not only be thinking about what is best for them, but what is best for others and to become a giving person. And when you become a giving person, that is how you become closer to God because God sees that you care for others and in return, God cares for you. It's a measure for measure type of thing.

I'm talking about giving of your talents, giving of your time and giving of your energy. In the Torah, there is a word, *venotnu*. It's a palindrome and you can read it back and forth. It means, and "they shall give." What the commentaries explain is that word, which means to give to others, or that they shall give, is a palindrome because when you give to others, you get back as well.

What are some of the modern day challenges that might get in the way of spiritual growth?

There is no question that the lure of what's available on the Internet, what is available in general in the world takes away from spiritual growth. There is no question that what everyone is exposed to, not only children, is a great deal of immorality, a great deal of freedom, a great deal of things that are really against what the Torah would want a Jew to be like.

What are some of the biggest crises young Jews face today that may not have been issues in past generations?

The fact that many of us text and email puts a [strain] on relationships, on emotional relationships. We utter two words to each other and that is enough. In years gone by, if a writer like yourself wanted to interview somebody, you would have to call them. You and I corresponded, until today with email ,and each email was five or 10 words at the most. You can't build relationships and friendships that way. There is no emotional stability. Because of that, there are many people who are lacking the capability of being close to other people.

There are husbands and wives who are texting each other and are not talking to each other. One of the things I ask in some of my speeches is, "When was the last time you had a conversation with your child? When was the last time a husband and wife had a conversation?"

What might be standing in the way of someone's ability to give of oneself?

Unfortunately, today, we have a tremendous amount of needs. We have financial needs, we have emotional needs and we have social needs. And when people feel they are not satisfied, either financially, emotionally or socially, they do not look to help others in that vein, because they are too busy getting satisfied and getting what they feel they need to have a decent life.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn

> *Do a favour for someone..Do you know what that does to a person?*

How would you guide someone in taking the first steps towards getting in the habit of giving of oneself?

One of the things I always propose, and many people have followed it, is to keep a notebook where you do one favour for someone else every single day. You do not go to sleep until you have done a favour for someone else. I'm not talking about a husband to his wife, or parents to children. That you do because that is what life is all about. You have to do that if you know what is good for you and want to have a decent relationship with your spouse. You have to do good for each other. But I'm talking about something out of the house.

I'll give you a small example, something I'm involved with right now. There is a person who is in jail and I write him a postcard every single day. He's in jail for whatever reason. He made a mistake and he's doing his time, but the whole world has forgotten about him. Who writes him? Who goes to see him? His family is far away so they can't always get there. He is basically a forgotten person, but he's a human being and he's going to be out eventually. But when someone writes him a card, it makes him feel that somebody cares.

Do a favour for someone, whether it is taking a child to school, visiting someone in a nursing home, making a call to someone who is alone, or getting involved in helping a widow or a divorced single mother. Single mothers are one of the most neglected [groups] in society. I'm involved with widow organizations and divorced mother organizations.

Call a woman who is alone at home with her kids. For the widow, everyone has compassion, but not so much with divorced women, for whatever reason. Call her and say, "Listen, I'm at Costco, I'm shopping, is there anything I can pick up for you?" Do you know what that does to a person? That is an unbelievable act of concern. It's a small thing, but it means so much to them.

You made that person's day because you made them feel that somebody cares. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

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Nachmanides' defence of Judaism

Backstory

JONATHAN L. MILEVSKY
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Any serious study of Nachmanides' Disputation in Barcelona in 1263 would need to include a careful analysis of his sermon, *Torat HaShem Temimah*. The sermon, which was delivered in the largest synagogue in Barcelona, was not only prepared in the same summer, it was actually delivered on the last day of the disputation, following a missionary appeal by King James of Aragon.

The overlap between the contents of the sermon and the disputation is relatively clear. Firstly, Nachmanides explicitly speaks about Christianity in the sermon. Secondly, he discusses the ultimate redemption, a major point of contention at the disputation, as Pablo Christiani, his adversary, brought rabbinic sources that appear to say that the messiah had already come.

The sermon should not be read simply as a contemporary document, but as a valuable source to gain an insight into Nachmanides' thought processes about his role in the disputation. Besides the obvious, but challenging, task of proving the authenticity of the Jewish tradition (possibly in the presence of his Christian detractors, although historian Salo Baron and scholar Rabbi Charles Chavel cast doubt on the possibility that the king and Christiani were in attendance by the time Nachmanides' sermon started), Nachmanides chose to make an even bolder argument. He was suggesting that Judaism is the only faith, not just the best one. This idea can be seen in four ways:

First, in addition to some broad themes, including the purpose of the narrative in the Bible, the wisdom of the Jewish tradition and its followers, the explanation for the commandments, he speaks about the patriarch Abraham's defence of his own beliefs and the hardship he is said to have endured as a result. By adding this midrash to his sermon, Nachmanides seems to be presenting himself as an Abraham defending the one true faith and who would also be likely to face hardship for publicly expressing his views.

Second, this can be seen from the way Nachmanides contends with Maimonides' view that Christianity brought the world closer to monotheism. Nachmanides

> *Nachmanides presents Judaism as the one and only faith*

responds to this claim in two ways. He says that, since the start of Christianity, there had been more confusion about the law, not less. He also says that those without access to the Torah are compared to "cattle." Nachmanides thus turns Maimonides' point on its head by arguing that Christianity has not made that much progress: by translating and reading the Torah, the nations of the world have simply become human; not godly.

Third, Nachmanides precludes the possibility of the existence of other genuine faiths. He does so when he states that without knowledge of the Creator, it is impossible to ascertain the purpose of creation. The logical outcome of this statement is that a faith that develops based on a natural theology – that is, what it ascertains from nature alone – would be "[cognizant of] neither commandment not transgression."

Fourth, Nachmanides' view of Judaism as the only faith can be seen from the exclusivity that he grants to prayer. When Nachmanides explains the reason for prayer – namely, an opportunity for people to assemble and express thankfulness to God for having been created – he seems to imply that Jews are the only people who pray. He knew, however, that Christians pray as well. By stating this so one-sidedly and matter-of-factly, Nachmanides betrays his assumption that Jewish prayer is the only prayer, at least as far as he is concerned. This reinforces the idea that Nachmanides presents Judaism as the one and only faith.

Nachmanides, who was by then 69, had earned quite a reputation. As Prof. David Novak has said, he was by that point "a halachic authority respected in all quarters of the Jewish world." His erudition, sharp mind, and exegetical skills, which helped him defend his faith throughout the disputation, are on full display in the sermon.

Still, his task was not an easy one. ■

Jonathan Milevsky is a PhD candidate in Religious Studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont.

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Zeifman, Louis William	Sept. 12, 2015	585 St Clements Ave	Langsam, Margalith	Sept. 20, 2015	Private
Levy, Tamy	Sept. 13, 2015	53 Lisa Cres	Burke, Abraham Albert	Sept. 20, 2015	133 Torresdale Ave
Alter, Elissa	Sept. 14, 2015	243 Erskine Ave	Skok, Ellen	Sept. 21, 2015	2 Lavender Crt
Fin, Alexander	Sept. 15, 2015	180 Ramblewood Lane			

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Inside

Down to the wire

With less than two weeks until election day, politicians and parties hone their pitches.

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Commentary PAGES 10, 11, 21

Defending Zionism on university campuses

Activist Chloé Valdary says Jews deserve to be free in their own land. **PAGE 46**

Herzelia

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	6:22 p.m.	7:23 p.m.
Montreal	6:02 p.m.	7:03 p.m.
Ottawa	6:10 p.m.	7:11 p.m.
Toronto	6:26 p.m.	7:27 p.m.
Winnipeg	6:32 p.m.	7:37 p.m.
Calgary	6:38 p.m.	7:44 p.m.
Vancouver	6:16 p.m.	7:20 p.m.

An unorthodox rabbi

In an excerpt from his new book, Rabbi John Moscowitz traces the evolution of liberal Judaism, and examines the challenge of striking a balance among faith, tradition and modernity. **PAGE 8**

Where are Jews in the niqab debate?

If Muslim veils are banned, kippot may not be far behind, Danielle Kubes argues. **PAGE 25**

Nostra Aetate 50 years later

Groundbreaking text ushered in a new era in Catholic-Jewish relations. **PAGE 10, 12**

Inspired by Margaret Atwood

A Handmaid's Tale sparked new album by Montreal band Lakes of Canada. **PAGE 31**

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Polo founder steps aside, and Nazi shocker in France

Fashion icon hands over reins

Ralph Lauren – born Ralph Lifshitz – said last week that's he's stepping down as CEO of the billion-dollar corporation that bears his name and has become synonymous with preppy style. Lauren, 76, tapped Stefan Larsson, the president of Gap's Old Navy branch, to succeed him in the post at Ralph Lauren Corp., but said he'll stay on as executive chairman and chief creative officer. Lauren is the son of Jewish immigrants from Belarus and grew up in New York City. He founded Polo in 1967, beginning with a line of neckties. It now includes men's, women's and kids' clothing, as well as home furnishings. Lauren holds more than 81 per cent of its common stock.

A Nice swastika?

A large Nazi banner unfurled in Nice, France, on Sept. 29 caused an outcry among locals and tourists after it was hung for a film being directed by Canadian Christian Duguay. The red banner with a swastika hung from the Palais de la Prefecture for two days during filming of an adaptation of Joseph Joffo's Shoah memoir *A Bag of Marbles*. "People started screaming," tourist Andrew Gentry told the *BBC*. "They were really agitated." The prefecture reportedly alerted people ahead of time and warned the city's Jewish residents. Still, many onlookers were puzzled, while some took selfies with the banner. In World War II, Waffen SS chief Alois Brunner stayed in Nice's Hotel Excelsior to plan round-ups of Jews. The memoir describes Joffo's journey from Nazi-occupied Paris to a safer city in southeast France. The film is a remake of a French one from 1975.

A film set that scared onlookers. TWITTER PHOTO

Musicians keep Tel Aviv hotel staff busy

Hip hop artist Kanye West was in Israel last week for a Sept. 30 concert in Ramat Gan. West, like many celebrities, stayed at the Dan Tel Aviv in the hotel's royal suite. His entourage, including personal bodyguards, occupied 40 rooms in the five-star hotel. When West checked out Oct. 1, the hotel had to quickly turn over his rooms, as rocker Jon Bon Jovi and his band arrived, ahead of their Oct. 3 Tel Aviv gig. But to the likely relief of hotel staff, they only occupied 20 rooms. ■

Gematria

4,500

The number of citizenship requests from Jews of Spanish descent whose ancestors were expelled during the Inquisition. Spain began processing cases Oct. 2, after passing legislation in June.

50,000

The number of people blessed by kohanim Sept. 30 at the Kotel, according to the Western Wall Heritage Foundation. Some media estimates said as many as 150,000 attended.

Quotable

Zionism is about... a love story between a people and its land, the celebration of an indigenous people returning to their land.

— Chloé Valdary, 22, the non-Jewish founder of the campus group Allies of Israel. See full interview on page 46.

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTO *SOLITUDE* BY MARC CHAGALL

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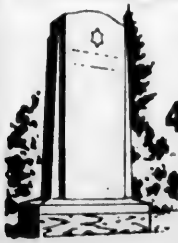

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Letters to the Editor

Response to the United Church

Gail Allan, as spokesperson for the United Church of Canada, invokes the quest for "justice and peace" as her church's purpose in investing so much energy in anti-Israel activities ("United Church responds," Sept. 24). She claims that the United Church's "action does not target Israel. Rather, the focus is Israeli policies and practices relating to the occupation of Palestinian territories."

If Allan wished the readers of her letter to believe in "justice and peace" as the motive for choosing Israel for special attention, her position may be slightly more credible if the United Church made motions against China for occupying Tibet, Turkey for northern Cyprus, Russia for the Crimea, Morocco for Western Sahara, etc. The "selection" of Israel for condemnation betrays the underlying, irrefutable, anti-Semitic motivation driving the action of the United Church of Canada.

Steve Samuel
Toronto

Views on marijuana

I am very disappointed that *The CJN* would publish an article (with a front page cartoon to make matters worse) that promotes the use of marijuana and practically endorses it with a Jewish hechsher ("The complicated halachahs of getting high," Sept. 24).

I have worked with people and their families suffering from addictions for more than 20 years. There is no glamour when dealing with the consequences of addiction, be it mental health, financial hardship, involvement with the law, and of course, family and relationship breakdowns.

Marijuana is not a benign "medicine" as your article portrays, especially when in the hands of youth and susceptible adults with concurrent mental health disorders.

This says nothing of the detrimental physical health effects of marijuana, including respiratory and cardiovascular risks. It is irresponsible to only state the "potential benefits" of this drug.

Furthermore, it is insulting to me as a Jew that marijuana should be a vehicle to become more "spiritual." To me, that is a failure in the most fundamental sense of what it means to be a Jew.

Thea Weisdorf
Toronto

As a parent of two young men, I was appalled to see the Sept. 24 cover of *The CJN*.

I thoroughly discourage the use of smoking pot in our family. This week, you put an illustration of a young Jewish man clearly smoking pot with a smile on his face, depicting that this activity is accepted, good and calming for young men.

May I remind you that this activity in Canada is still illegal. This kind of image creates the illusion that this is an OK activity. It is not! It doesn't help to see this image in our home for a week.

I know that the article discusses more of this issue. It is the cover that is awful and irresponsible. I have disposed of the cover and kept the rest of the paper for reading, although I am so disgusted by this irresponsible choice, I can't bring myself to read the paper yet.

Suzanne Reisler Litwin
Montreal

I enjoyed the article on marijuana and what Rabbi Daniel Korobkin had to say.

I would just like to point out that marijuana is not a gateway drug and that marijuana is mentioned in the Bible. It says, "let he who sins be stoned!" I think a few of us have sinned once or twice!

Howard Dover
Toronto

Why we start with *Kol Nidrei*

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz is puzzled over the purpose of the *Kol Nidrei* prayer, writing that it is "more melody than meaning" (Sept. 17). Perhaps this analogy might shed light on its purpose.

As a lawyer, I have always appreciated judges who commence a hearing by telling litigants they should relax and try to be at ease, even though the next few hours of trial might be stressful. The *Kol Nidrei* prayer has a similar purpose. By assuring us that we are absolved of the vows we have made and the promises we have broken, we can relax and more easily endure our fast while we are being judged from on high. That is why the Yom Kippur service begins with *Kol Nidrei* and not the heavier "who by fire, who by stoning" prayer of *Unetaneh Tokef*.

And as Rabbi Steinmetz notes, it does have a great melody.

Max Berger
Toronto

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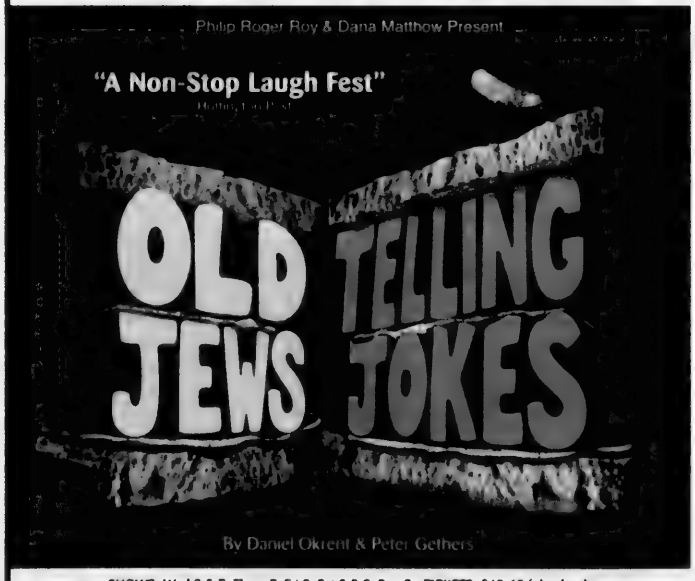

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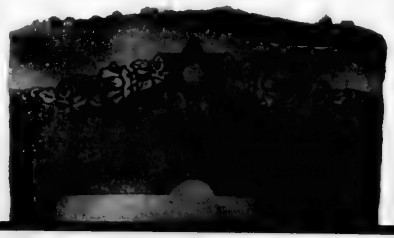

RABBI·2·RABBI

Too afraid to talk about God

Clergy are hesitant to exclude agnostic or atheist Jews, and the questions involved are difficult to confront, so the topic often goes unaddressed

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FOUNDER, THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY, MONTREAL

RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM
BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Scheim: I was fascinated by a recent opinion piece in the *New York Times* by economist Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, headlined "Googling for God." The author suggests that Internet searches implying skepticism and doubt regarding religion were on the increase.

Seemingly, many of the faithful are willing to share their spiritual doubts from behind the safety of their computer screens, but are much less likely to confront their clergymen and women with similar expressions of uncertain faith.

Admittedly, God-talk is not a definitive feature of most of our synagogues. My suspicion is that the more traditionalist the community or rabbi, the less often one is likely to hear a sermon or a lecture on the subject of God. Like many, if not most, rabbis, my sermons tend to focus on observance, Jewish learning, morality, Israel, and rarely if at all on the topic of God.

I would need a second Yom Kippur for atonement were I to place God and elephants in the same sentence, but I suspect that this, for traditional Jews, may be the proverbial elephant in the room: our hesitation to address fundamental issues of belief in the Creator of the universe, which, at least according to the Rambam, is the first of all mitzvot.

Are we rabbis hesitant to focus on belief for fear that we would open a door to doubt that would better remain closed?

Rabbi Finegold: I can only speak for my own practice, but I fear that I fall squarely into your categorization. I teach adults extensively and I often avoid the topic of God. Maybe this is wrong, but this is often a clear decision on my part.

I don't want to alienate those in the room that are clearly already agnostic or atheistic. My feeling is that these individuals are more and more present and more and more vocal in our communities, whether we like it or not. And while my belief in a divine being is strong, I don't want those that do not have the same conviction to feel there is no room for them in my big tent.

If someone doesn't believe in God, but wants to sit in a Bible class and learn about their heritage, I want them to have that as a full and valid expression of their Judaism.

Rabbi Scheim: A prominent cantor once shared with me that he was an atheist. A very likable individual, his honesty impressed me, but I admit to having being troubled by the seeming conflict between his role as *shliach tzibur*, emissary of the people before God and his denial of belief in the existence of the recipient of the prayers he would so beautifully chant.

Likely, there are other cantors, rabbis and devoted practitioners of Jewish prayer who avoid the fundamental theological question of God's existence, because of the difficult questions that arise, especially in light of the tragic dimensions of the last century of Jewish history. Like you, I would never be dismissive of one who struggles with the concept of God, but would want to find a way to open the discussion, since intellectual honesty should accompany us in our pursuit of Jewish learning and practice.

Rabbi Finegold: When I teach classes about Judaism and sexuality, I invariably point out that the values presented in Jewish thought about sex are presented from a heteronormative and masculine point of view, but that this does not mean the values cannot be transferred to other forms of relationships.

Perhaps we need to talk more about God unabashedly and make a similar point. We should say that Jewish tradition has always placed God at the centre, and that we personally place God at the centre, but just because someone else does not doesn't make them unwelcome at the table anymore.

Perhaps there are other ways to be more inclusive. I would love to hear from people who have questions about God internally as to why they choose not to share them with their clergy as much as they do with Google. I am also curious as to how they feel when clergy do discuss God. Do they understand that it is a central part of their message and teaching, or does it turn them more away from religion as a result? ■

How to reach us

Vol. XLV, No. 39 (2,215)*

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Subscription Inquiries: 416-932-5095
Toll Free: 1-866-849-0864 **Fax:** 416-932-2488
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Sales, National & Toronto Local: Canadian Primedia, 416-922-3605

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Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation.
July 14, 2015

Canadian Heritage / Patrimoine canadien

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From the Archives | Simchat Torah

GRAPHIC ARTISTS PHOTO, CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS CC NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A 1987 Toronto Jewish federation Simchat Torah event attended by several lay members of Canadian Jewish Congress, Ontario region.

SeeJN | Sukkot in Israel

KATZRIN PARK/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Thousands of Israelis visited Ancient Katzrin Park last week where they saw an early synagogue, a reconstructed home and an olive press and enjoyed the *Talmudic Experience*, a series of musical and theatrical performances.

From Yoni's Desk

A new perspective on the holidays

My daughter was too young last year to have any real sense of what she was hearing during the shofar blasts on Rosh Hashanah. But this year, approaching her second birthday, I tried to prepare her for the holiday's aural experience. For a week leading up to the big day, we talked about the significance of the shofar and mimicked the three types of sounds she would hear in shul. On the way to synagogue for the first day of Rosh Hashanah, we reviewed the lessons of the previous week. She seemed to have it down.

As the ba'al tekiah took his place before the Ark and began to lead the congregation through the introductory prayers and blessings, I told her the big moment had finally arrived. "We have to be very, very quiet now," I whispered, "so that we can hear the shofar." The congregation grew silent as the first blast echoed through the sanctuary.

Then, before the shofar blower could launch into his next note, my daughter piped up for everyone to hear.

"What that noise?" she asked.

Ten days later, my wife and I packed up our daughter and her six-month-old brother and headed to shul for Yom Kippur services. There were toys and a cheerful babysitter in the basement playroom, but my daughter insisted on coming upstairs to the sanctuary. "OK," I said, "so long as you sit nicely – and quietly – next to me."

That didn't last long. Soon, she was wriggling away and wandering around amid the worshippers. Eventually, she took a seat on an empty bench in the women's section, where she munched on nuts and raisins and made conversation with some of the female congregants. She refused to budge – it was as though she knew she'd found a space where I couldn't easily retrieve her and quiet her down. Eventually, my wife had to escort her back downstairs.

Just a few days after that, my daughter and I stood together in our home as I tried to explain the lulav and etrog to her. "We're going to hold them in our hands now and make a brachah," I said. "And then we'll shake them in front of us, to the right side, behind our bodies, to the left, up and down."

She wrapped her fingers around the two oddities, and I cupped my hands around hers to make sure she didn't drop them. I recited the blessings, and told her it was now time for the shaking. She responded by immediately trying to take a bite out of the etrog.

These are my memories of the holiday season just passed, and, to be honest, it was the most I've enjoyed the holidays in a long time. My daughter's antics injected a dose of levity into those heavy days. I needed that.

In years past, the busy holiday season would inevitably put me in an anxious mood, obsessively reviewing and critiquing the year that was. There was still some of that this year, too, but the cloud lifted quickly. When there's so much to look forward to, I guess it's hard to get too worked up about the past. ■ — YONI

ESSAY

Visions of Rwanda: What a buffalo and a bird can teach us

Naomi Matlow

While on safari in Akagera National Park, a protected park of multiple ecosystems in eastern Rwanda along the Tanzanian border, one could not help but be struck by the beauty, warm winds and seamless flow of landscapes from African sahara to hippo-filled swampland in the span of a 10-minute jeep ride.

After about 45 minutes seeing topi after topi (topis are African antelopes, I would soon learn) I was getting a little weary. I could not help but think, "Where are the giraffes? Did I miss the zebras? Could we be the trip that actually gets to see the lions?"

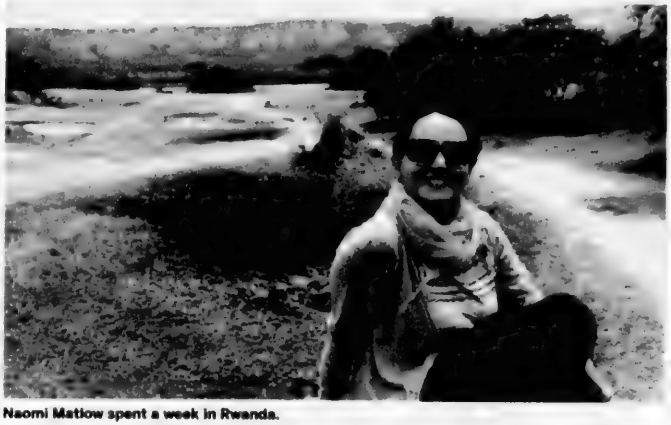
Ultimately, the lions were out of view because they sought shade from the heat, but the zebras, giraffes and the glimpse of two elephants grazing in the distance were everything that we could have possibly imagined.

However, it is the image of the buffalo resting with a small white bird atop its back that has been singed into my memory.

As our wonderful guide and park ranger Emmanuel told us, the Cape buffalo is often spotted with the oxpecker, a small white bird by his side. One could not help but question, how could a buffalo possibly befriend a small bird in the dog-eat-dog, or more specifically hippo-eat-lion, world that is the sub-Saharan wilderness?

We then learned that the oxpecker feeds off the ticks and insects that seek to feast on the buffalo. The buffalo in turn protects the oxpecker from the prey that would feast on it but for the deterrence effect of a giant buffalo being by its side. The result is the mutualism and beneficial co-existence that occurs between the buffalo and the bird.

From the outside looking in, this mutual relationship seems absurd and unbelievable. As I watched the two creatures, I imagined that 30 seconds later the buffalo would quickly grab the bird with his mouth and we would be audience to a true moment in the wild—lunchtime.



Naomi Matlow spent a week in Rwanda.

We in fact were witness to a true moment in the wild, but it was not the wild that I had imagined or anticipated. Perhaps that is because it was an occurrence seldom experienced in the human wild – the idea of peaceful co-existence to the point of mutual benefit. I thought: if the behemoth species that is the buffalo can find a way to live side-by-side with the meek and fragile oxpecker in a way that ensures both of their survivals, why can't we?

After a far too short week in Rwanda, it became clear to me that Rwanda is a country of possibility and a beacon of hope in a world where it often feels like co-existence is a near impossibility.

It is a jaw-dropping place from its vast rolling hills to the genuine kindness and heartfelt passion that I felt from the smallest human interaction. No person, like no country, goes through its existence unscathed. However the true test is how we as individuals or countries recognize our past histories in the effort to reshape our futures.

Rwanda is an incredible model of how people can live together and co-exist in a way that is mutually beneficial, though from the outside such an occurrence after so much devastation may seem impossible. In a country where 21 years ago neighbour took up arms against neighbour killing over one million Tutsis and Hutu moderates, how can security, government stability and social welfare be cornerstones for that same nation? How can Hutus and Tutsis now live in harmony and work side by side with the same goal of creating a stable and safe country?

I couldn't help but think "who is to say what is impossible?"

I was privileged to spend a week at the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village (ASYV) on a JDC Entwine Insider Trip. Founded by the visionary role model, the late Anne Heyman, the ASYV is a youth village modelled after Yemin Orde in Israel, where 500 of Rwanda's most vulnerable youths live, learn and grow in a safe and supportive community built on family values.

While in the village, our group was given the special opportunity to witness incredible talents, share in thought-provoking discussions, dance, laugh, sing and experience the overflowing kindness and compassion of the magnificent students of the ASYV. Again I thought, who is to say what is impossible?

In addition to the residential community, the Liquidnet Family High School, the sports fields and the extra-curricular buildings, there is a solar field built by Gigawatt Global on the beautiful 144-acre ASYV oasis. This one solar field alone has increased the electrical capacity of Rwanda by six per cent in a country where only 15 per cent of the population has access to electricity. With Israeli inventors, Chinese products, French and German manufacturers and Rwandan contractors, the solar field is another model of mutual benefit.

People can work together in ways that benefit all that take part, and in Rwanda they do. Maybe we just need a little bit of a reminder of this possibility sometimes. I know I did.

If there is a place on this planet like Agahozo-Shalom, a place on this planet like Rwanda today, and a place where a buffalo can befriend a little white bird, maybe anything is possible. Maybe after all, the past does not dictate our future. ■

Naomi Matlow is a Toronto writer who recently participated in an Entwine trip to Rwanda with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Together with composer Teresa Lotz she has written Three-TimesFast, a musical that was previewed at the International OCD Conference in Boston this past July. A version of this essay was originally posted at asyv.org.

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The balance between faith and modernity

In an excerpt from his new book, **RABBI JOHN MOSCOWITZ** reflects on his own unorthodox evolution

The late Israeli philosopher Ernst Simon often told the story of the last time Franz Kafka visited Berlin – in 1924, not long before the writer died, a month short of his 41st birthday. Walking through a park, Kafka came upon a little girl crying her eyes out. When he asked why she was in such distress, the girl sobbed that she had lost her doll.

Kafka was touched and saddened. He told the girl not to worry, that her doll had merely gone on a trip. In fact, he assured the girl, he knew the doll, having recently seen her as she was about to depart on a journey. Kafka promised that if the little girl returned to the park the next day, he would bring her a letter from her doll. And so each morning, over the next several weeks, Kafka brought a letter from the doll to his new friend, ostensibly written while on her trip.

During those weeks, Kafka grew more and more ill. He decided to return to Prague, but not before buying the girl another doll.

Accompanying the new doll was a letter written by Franz Kafka in which he insisted that, appearances to the contrary, this was indeed the doll that had belonged to the little girl. Admittedly, he told her, this doll looked different, but she had to understand that her doll had been on a long journey, had witnessed many remarkable sights, and had endured many difficult experiences. Life, Kafka wrote his young charge, had changed the doll's appearance.

The author in the Maasai Mara, Kenya, 2009.

Ismar Schorsch, former chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, says that while there are various possible meanings to the Kafka parable, he prefers this one: "That a transformative experience alters us externally, as well as internally." I suspect that Schorsch had Jews in mind here.

Schorsch's observation explains a good deal about us: who we are as Jews today and how circumstances have radically changed us over time, transforming not just our religious culture but, more profoundly so, ourselves. Like the doll in the Kafka story, we might wish we were the same, but we are not. Not at all.

I don't so much mean the externals of dress and language, where and even how we live. Or even this remarkable statistic (more than 20 years old now): approximately 98 per cent of Jews no longer reside in the place in which at least one grandparent was born. I refer to the deeper, the more telling metamorphosis: how we as Jews think, how we think about the Jews, how we think about other people, how we wish others to think about us.

...

Kafka famously wrote in *Letter to His Father*:

"You really had brought some traces of Judaism with you from the ghetto-like village community; it was not much and it dwindled a little more in the city and during your military service, but still, the impressions and memories of your youth did just about suffice for some sort of Jewish life... Even in this, there was still Judaism enough, but it was too little to be handed on to the child; it all dribbled away while you were passing it on."

I was no different from Kafka, really, and perhaps neither were you. Off I went to rabbinical school, not to be a rabbi but hungry for knowledge and in search of the Jews. Over the next couple of years, I was enthusiastic to learn – yet also confused. Truth to tell, quite disappointed.

I loved learning Jewish texts and ideas. But where were they in the liberal synagogues? They just weren't there – not the ideas, not the rituals, not the Hebrew, not even more than a faint smell of Peoplehood.

Many Reform rabbis were knowledgeable, pious and interesting. But the Judaism in Reform synagogues was emptied out, remedial and thin. The gap was disturbing, and because I was then actually thinking of becoming a rabbi, I was more than a bit beside myself.

Bewildered – this is the fall of 1979 now – I approached my teacher, Rabbi David Ellenson, then a newly minted professor of Jewish thought (later to become the president of Hebrew Union College).

"David," I remember asking more than a bit plaintively, "where is the 'there' there in Reform Judaism? I understand Reform and Conservative Judaism as effective strategies for keeping Jews within the fold. These movements, from the beginning, have understood that modernity causes the withering away of tradition – hence the liberal movements recognize that Jews need the help of synagogues in remaining Jewish. But I can't find the content in the liberal approaches. I hear the words – they're nice – but where are the ideas, the learning and the guts behind the words? Is Judaism just confined to a private pursuit that rabbis engage in and that's it?"

As he listened, Rabbi Ellenson at first frowned, and then as I concluded, he smiled. "You've named the problem exactly. Our way is more of a social strategy to keep Jews within the fold than it is a religious tradition.

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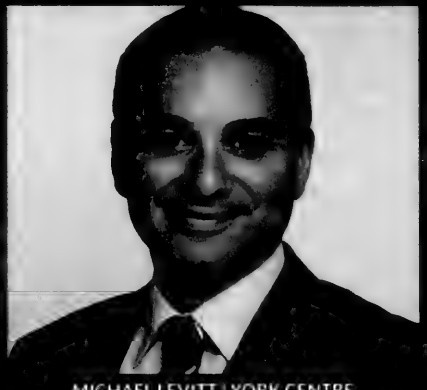

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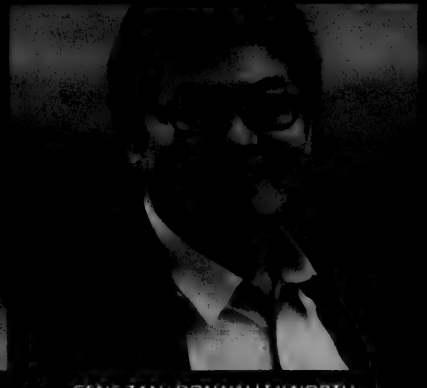

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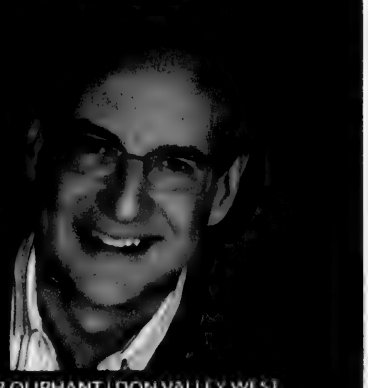

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Jews and Catholics: a pilgrimage to partnership

Rev. Damian MacPherson

Some will agree that Canadian Jews are more inclined to identify with Catholics when they refer to the body of believers referred to as Christians. Perhaps this is so for any number of reasons. One thinks, for example, of the church's involvement in the Crusades, the Inquisition, enforceable conversions, but especially the involvement of Catholics during the period of the Holocaust.

In times past, suspicion was a hallmark of the Catholic-Jewish relationship. Jews remember the long history of forcible conversions. Christians considered Judaism as an obstinate religion. In turn Jews – with historical justification – suspected that the Christian motivation for communication with them was aimed at conversion.

Thankfully, times change. At the grassroots level, it might be said that today, Catholics and Jews carry on a very civil relationship with one another. Today, tolerance and respect one for another can be found as Christians and Jews find themselves being neighbours and co-workers. Gratefully, deep and genuine friendships have developed between the two communities over the years.

But the truth is that, while relationships between Catholics and Jews have improved greatly, they need to continue to do so in the future. Happily, across Canada there are a number of Christian-Jewish dialogue groups who do their best to show the fruits of such dialogue encounters. Their collective voices give concrete expression to the mutual regard we must have for one another as Christians and Jews. This pilgrimage to deeper partnership can never again afford to be interrupted. Our synagogues and churches ought to see as obligatory the need to promote such progress.

In 1960, a noted French Jewish historian, Jules Isaac, presented Pope John XXIII with pertinent historical information on Christian anti-Judaism and certain attitudes that contributed to the Holocaust. This historic meeting is generally credited with being a major impetus for the pope's decision to direct Cardinal Augustin Bea, on Sept. 18, 1960, to draft a declaration on the Catholic Church's relationship to the Jewish People for the upcoming Second Vatican Council. This was the genesis of what would become the council document known as *Nostra Aetate* ("in our time"). In addressing the significances of all world religions, the document boldly declares that "the Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions." Further clarifying the Catholic Church's position, the document continues: "She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men."

Specifically, the document affirmed that "Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures." It further declared that the church "decries hatred, persecutions, [and] displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone."

The document spends the greater portion of its time teaching and affirming the place and importance of the Jews, from whose validity Christians derive their identity.

Published on Oct. 28, 1965, this groundbreaking text is now celebrating its 50th anniversary. I dare to suggest that the average Catholic and Jew is unaware of the scope of this revolutionary document and thus the importance of the anniversary being celebrated.

Together we must praise God, because the darkness of night has passed and the dawning of a new day has arrived, offering sure hope for the continuing success of this emerging pilgrimage and partnership. Going forward, therefore, we are confident that, as it is written in Psalms 29:11, "The Lord will give strength to his people. The Lord will bless his people with peace." ■

Rev. Damian MacPherson, SA, is the director for ecumenical and interfaith affairs at the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto. The Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Toronto, in conjunction with the Archdiocese of Toronto, hosts a celebration commemorating the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate in Toronto on Oct. 8. For more information, visit www.cjdt.org.

Translating civic engagement into political engagement

Daniel Held

Voter turnout among young voters is abysmal. In the 2011 Canadian election, the turnout rate was 61.1 per cent. Among the youngest cohort of eligible voters, aged 18 to 24, it was 38.8 per cent, while among those 65 to 74 years old, it was 75.1 per cent. Political engagement, manifest through voter rates, is alarmingly low among young voters and, especially with an election on the horizon, we have an obligation to engage these voters in the political process.

Too often, however, political engagement is conflated with civil engagement. While they may not be voting, young people are engaged in their communities: volunteering, devoting time to building community, informing themselves on key social issues and taking action with passion and vigour.

The American National Civic Engagement Survey differentiates between two forms of public engagement: political engagement and civic engagement. Political engagement is activity aimed at influencing government policy or affecting the selection of public officials. Civic engagement, on the other hand, is participation aimed at achieving a public good through direct hands on work in co-operation with others.

The Jewish community has done a good job in mobilizing young adults toward civic engagement. We send youths to the developing world to build schools and dig wells; to Poland to learn about the Holocaust, racism and genocide; and to Israel to build the bonds of peoplehood. Our schools, camps and youth movements teach about tzedakah not only by raising money but by facilitating volunteer opportunities with local charities. We educate our youth about global issues of justice, the environment and poverty and particularistic issues including Israel and the fight against anti-Semitism.

We can be proud of our youths' high levels of civic engagement, as well as their passion and drive to contribute to their community and to better the world. But these high levels of civic engagement do not translate into political engagement. Here, we have a long way to go.

Too often, attempts to build political engagement are based on platitudes. We quote rabbinic leaders urging Jews to exercise their voting rights and have star musicians headline Rock the Vote concerts. It's not enough to talk about the importance of voting. Rather we must align political engagement with the values of civic engagement.

The first step is to explicitly demonstrate the link between the communal goals and aspirations so strongly developed through civic engagement and the results that can be netted through political engagement. Global development, fighting anti-Semitism, alleviating poverty, saving the environment and supporting Israel cannot be achieved through civic engagement alone, but only through a partnership of civic engagement and political action. For youths to see that the issues of concern to them are political issues can play a role in growing political engagement.

The second step is for us to make political engagement a regular part of our lives. Too often, we measure political engagement only through voter turnout on election day. Political engagement must run deeper. It can be manifest by following political trends, engaging in conversation with family and peers, and advocating for issues. Through recent campaigns, the Jewish community has helped place volunteers to work on campaigns, supporting candidates beyond the ballot box.

If political action is seen as a regular part of our work to bring about change in our community and our world, as something that happens not only when an election has been called, but as part of our commitment to the issues that are important to us, we can raise electoral turnout rates

My vote will be counted on Oct. 19, not only because I believe in the importance of exercising a right that has not always been offered to my ancestors, but because I believe it's one small way of bringing about the kinds of change I want to see in the world. ■

Beginnings, endings and an election

Jean M. Gerber

This column will appear as the season of holidays draws to a close and the October election date looms in Canada. It also appears the week we begin our Torah readings again, literally from the beginning, with Bereshit.

Is there a connection? Let's see.

We have just spent weeks examining our own lives, trying to make amends to those we have injured, pledging to be better this coming year than we were last year, and celebrating the receiving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

Now we will again begin the study of our Foundation Text. In Bereshit (one version of the creation of mankind), God forms man from the earth's dust and breathes "*nishmat chaim*" into God's creation. Thus, the new creature becomes "a living soul."

Just a living soul, not an Israelite or Jewish one.

This week I will chant the Haftorah for Bereshit. I learn that we, the people of Israel, are to be a "light to the nations," and one of our principle duties is "to rescue prisoners from confinement... those who sit in darkness."

I think I have found a connection among these three things: beginnings, endings (of the holidays) and elections.

Beginnings. We have been challenged these past weeks by pictures of desperate people trying to escape war and devastation in their home countries. They seek a beginning. Thousands have died for this hope, while others continue to push forward. We should not be surprised that, finally, the misrule and murder in those countries have caused the bravest of their people to try for something better – as did the Jews of Canada whose families came from similarly war-torn, economically ravished countries before and after World War II.

What beginnings they faced, what challenges, in a Canada not friendly to their plight. Neither prewar immigrants nor survivors found a Canada welcoming them. Just try substituting "Jew" for this current wave of refugees (mostly Muslim) and you will find a familiar refrain. Ironically, Germany, once the author of our destruction, has come forward with help.

Elections. We have a chance to tell the next government how we feel about Canada's responsibilities to welcome another population, which, if the past is any standard, will greatly benefit our country. When Jews tried to enter Canada, whether before the war, after the war, or from Hungary in 1956, they were often assumed to be "unassimilable."

Jews were too poor, or too rich, or too dirty, or not-quite-white, or communists (shudder). Face it, just not Christian.

Let's recall that both stories of creation never identify the nationality or religion of the first people. And the accompanying Haftorah delegates, no, it commands us, to rescue prisoners from confinement, those who dwell in darkness. Our reluctance to demand that our government, whoever it will be, should move expeditiously to rescue more than a few, shows us to have assimilated the worst aspects of Canada, not led with our own best ones.

Endings. The holidays are over, and we should take leave of them with a sigh.

But otherwise, who knows the endings? I am not a strong believer in inevitable endings such as "this will end in tears." Maybe it will end in rejoicings, like the reapers in the psalm.

I will hope for some things to end. I will hope that (see above, for my opinion on receiving immigrants from the Middle East) when those who were taught to hate us learn about Canada and about our own community, they will learn to not hate or fear us. They will see us as sharing their hopes and dreams for a good ending to their struggles.

They certainly will not un-learn their hatred and fear in squalid refugee camps where they are prey to ISIS recruiters or propaganda blaming their suffering on Israel/Jews. Surely we could try to make their ending one of joy. ■

What's Russia up to in Syria?

Paul Michaels

It's rare to find the U.S. media virtually united in their criticism of President Barack Obama's Middle East policy but, following Obama's speech to the UN General Assembly on Sept. 28 and his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, that was indeed the case.

Specifically, the criticism was aimed at Obama's lack of a coherent plan for Syria (and Iraq) as Putin runs circles around him by building up Russian military might there and extending his influence into the wider region at the expense of the Americans.

New York Times editorials often appear to be conduits for the Obama administration (see the paper's comments on the Iran nuclear deal). Yet, regarding Syria and what Putin is up to, even the *Times* expressed, however mildly, skepticism about Obama's new call at the UN for "managed transition," in co-operation with Syria, Russia and Iran, away from Syrian President Bashar Assad to a new "more inclusive" government.

"But there is little reason to believe that any compromise between the Assad government and the opposition fighters, or Washington and Moscow, will happen soon," the *Times* wrote. Even more to the point, while the *Times* acknowledged that Obama didn't create the "catastrophe" that Syria has become it complained that Obama, while excoriating Assad for the carnage he's created, "doesn't have the answer" to change anything on the ground.

The *Times* also noted that the Obama administration was caught "flatfooted" twice recently, taken surprise first by Putin's rapid deployment of tanks and jet fighters (there are also reports of Russian troops) to Syria; then by the announcement that Russia will be co-ordinating sharing intelligence with Syria, Iraq and Iran.

Making the same points, only more bluntly, the *Washington Post* argued that "Mr. Obama lacks any strategy to back up [his] vision [of a stable, democratic Syria] or to counter Mr. Putin, who is backing his words with a show of military 'hard power' and a flurry of alliance-building in Syria, Iraq and Iran."

The *Post* also faulted Obama for having failed several years ago, when this might have been feasible, "to lend timely, effective support to Syria's rebellion before extremists took it over." Now it's far too late. There is little to choose between Assad, responsible for 250,000 dead Syrians and the displacement of 11 million others – half the country's population – and ISIS, which has killed far fewer, but whose barbarity, and plans for a great deal more, may exceed even Assad's.

Ideas are scant for finding a replacement for Assad, given the hold his extensive Alawite clan has in the Syrian "government," which Putin is sworn to protect and which Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, view as a guarantee of their continuing dominance there. No wonder they're thrilled with Russia's new muscular approach, which buffets their own.

Israel, of course, remains worried about what these developments mean for its own security, especially on the Golan Heights, where Iran and its proxy force, Hezbollah, appear determined to entrench themselves in their campaign against the Jewish state.

It's not a surprise that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the chief of the IDF and the head of military intelligence flew to Moscow for a meeting with Putin to establish ground rules for the IDF's own operations in Syria to counter these mounting threats, including trying to keep advanced Iranian weapons out of Hezbollah's hands. Netanyahu reportedly came away with some assurances.

Ron Ben-Yishai, the respected military analyst for *Yediot Achronot*, said late last month, with partial optimism, that "Russia will probably serve as a stabilizing force in Syria, but what's less appealing is that it will legitimize an Iranian entrance into the country, under its supervision." Ben-Yishai was quick to add, however, that "it's unknown what will come out of the complex regional stew Russia is cooking."

Uncertainty, instability and complex speculative scenarios remain the order of the day. ■

News

Event to mark 50 years of improved Catholic-Jewish ties

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jews, Christians and Muslims will gather at the University of Toronto's St. Michael's College Oct. 8 to celebrate the legacy of a Vatican document that intended to radically revise the Catholic Church's relations with other religions.

It's been 50 years since the proclamation of *Nostra Aetate* ("In Our Time"), which daringly reached out to non-Christian faiths, particularly Jews.

It was, essentially, the church's first positive statement about Judaism, and it changed the nature of Catholic-Jewish relations, for it not only recognized the validity of Mosaic law from which Christianity sprang, but it finally absolved Jews, past and present, of the charge they killed Jesus.

The day-long conference, titled "Responsibility to Engage," will feature several Jewish participants, including former senator Hugh Segal, now master of Massey College, and Rabbi Ron Kronish, founding director of the Interreligious Co-ordinating Council in Israel, who will address a lunchtime session on "A Jewish Response to 50 years of the Dialogue since *Nostra Aetate*: The Way Forward."

Also slated to speak is Edward Kessler, founder director of the Woolf Institute and a fellow of St. Edmund's College, Cambridge. He is a leading thinker in Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations.

There will also be an evening program and four breakout sessions on economics, the environment, politics and culture, including a panel moderated by lawyer Mark Freiman, the last president of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Among the sponsors is the Toronto Board of Rabbis. About 200 people are expected.

Hugh Segal

Rabbi Ron Kronish

Three years in the planning, the program will celebrate the document's legacy of engagement, said conference chair Barbara Boraks, executive director of Christian Jewish Dialogue of Toronto.

The "whole premise of the document was the concept of engagement," Boraks told *The CJN*. "So we're taking the idea of engagement and applying [it] in a broader way in society."

Indeed, one of the sessions will explore how religion can have a positive impact on social and public policy.

Boraks pointed to Pope Francis's recent swing through the United States, in which the pontiff spoke of the "productive and human way to deal with social issues. We need to focus on ideas and people, not on ideology, and we need to engage with one another in a manner that facilitates dialogue and not polarity or debate," she said.

"So we tried to create a conference that celebrates the document by engaging our audience in a manner that not just talks about what engagement can do, but can show them what it can do."

An outgrowth of the liberalizing Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), *Nostra Aetate* was just 1,600 words long, but it packed a game-changing punch.

Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI on Oct. 28, 1965, it spoke warmly of Buddhists and Hindus ("the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions," it stated) and Muslims ("they adore the one God.")

But it saved its best for Jews, which it referred to as "Abraham's stock."

It said the crucifixion "cannot be charged against all the Jews... then alive, nor against the Jews of today," and that Jews "should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God.

It also decried "hatred, persecutions [and] displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone."

The document "made a major difference in [interfaith] relations, in trying to understand one another," said Rabbi David Seed of Adath Israel Congregation, a member of the conference's steering committee.

Fifty years on, the statement, which was adopted by the church's bishops by a vote of 2,221 to 88, was "prescient in terms of the need for this type of dialogue." Today, "we see how important it is to continue on in that way, and do more," Rabbi Seed said.

Going forward, the next big challenge for all mainstream religions is the rise of fundamentalism in all faiths, not just Islam, he stressed.

Fundamentalism "doesn't wipe out gains that have taken place with *Nostra Aetate* but that only makes us work harder so that we understand the importance, even more so, to continue that dialogue and respect and understanding." ■

For conference details, visit responsibilitytoengage.wordpress.com.

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Montreal Reconstructionist shul opposes interfaith rabbis

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Montreal's Congregation Dorshei Emet, one of Canada's three Reconstructionist congregations, opposes the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College's (RRC) Sept. 30 decision to revoke its "non-Jewish partner" policy.

The policy stipulated that a Jew married to, or in a committed relationship with, a non-Jewish partner wasn't permitted to enter or graduate from the rabbinical school.

"I think rabbis need to model maximal Jewish living and not model what's on the rise – mixed marriages," Dorshei Emet's Rabbi Ron Aigen said.

The RRC consulted his synagogue board last year, he explained, when both he and the board expressed their resistance to removing the ban that prevented the ordination of intermarried rabbis.

While his congregation hasn't made any decisions about whether to continue its affiliation with the college, Rabbi Aigen stressed, "We're not happy with the situation." He argued that allowing rabbis to intermarry promotes the practice and sends the message that conversion of non-Jewish partners needn't be considered.

While rabbis should support interfaith couples striving to raise Jewish children, he said, "for a rabbi to take that route [of intermarrying], to me seems wrong."

In a Sept. 30 statement, the Philadelphia-based RRC – the movement's only seminary – announced the revocation of the ban, after a faculty vote Sept. 21. It said the movement believes the boundaries of Judaism are "porous and constantly evolving" and that the Jewish future depends on "shifting focus toward Jews 'doing Jewish' in ways that are meaningful to them rather than on 'being Jewish' because of bloodline or adherence to mandated behaviours.'"

In a media conference call Sept. 30, RRC president Rabbi Deborah Waxman said faculty reached the decision after an extensive, two-year consultation process with RRC students and alumni, as well as with leadership from congregations across North America. The exact results of the vote are confidential, she said.

Rabbi Waxman said the RRC doesn't believe it's the job of rabbis to "police boundaries" and that the change will potentially expand the number of "passionate, excited, creative Jewish leaders" and increase the number of rabbis who can model what it means to create a Jewish home in a mixed-faith household.

Intermarriage is prevalent in the United States, she said, yet "there are interfaith families living wonderfully rich Jewish lives and making beautiful Jewish homes. We can work with them and help raise them to the highest level of leadership."

Rabbi Deborah Waxman

Rabbi Aigen said he disagrees that two partners can have completely separate spiritual identities, arguing this contradicts the value of Judaism being a "family affair."

"Judaism is about creating unified family identity – not one that's [necessarily] racial or biological, but one you can join, if you want."

He stressed that Dorshei Emet welcomes people in mixed marriages to the congregation and encourages their participation in synagogue life, however, "ritually, there are certain limitations [on non-Jewish participants] in terms of what they can do in synagogue. Those limitations are part of them saying, 'I'm not Jewish and I don't want to become Jewish formally.' But you can't say, 'I don't want to be Jewish, but I want to be treated like a Jew and given all the rights and privileges of Jewish life.'"

Rabbi Tina Grimberg of Toronto's Reconstructionist Congregation Darchei Noam, wouldn't comment on the new policy, but said she expressed her views on the subject in a piece for *The CJN* last May on whether rabbis should be permitted to intermarry.

In discussing the issue's complexity, Grimberg challenged the notion that "intercoupled" rabbis are more likely to help integrate interfaith couples into the Jewish world. Rather, she wrote, "empathy, understanding, real engagement in people's lives... is what fosters integration."

She concluded that while there's evidence children of interfaith couples can and do live Jewishly, ordaining intermarried rabbis isn't the way to accomplish such integration. "The Jewish life of a rabbi has never been meant to be a mirror for his or her community," she wrote.

Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton of Or Haneshamah, Ottawa's Reconstructionist congregation, said the decision is a positive change.

Rabbi Waxman said that the RRC, which typically graduates between eight and 10 rabbis each year, has previously turned away potential students who would otherwise make "wonderful rabbis." ■

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Fashion trailblazer remembered for his unique talents

JODIE SHUPAC
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A man of immense talents, dynamism and passion, clothier Alan Cherry was, as his sister Joy put it, an "unusual force in the city."

Descended from a family of retailers dating back to the early 1900s, Cherry firmly established himself as a fashion icon in his own right, a reputation he upheld even after he left the industry in 2006 due to illness.

Cherry died Sept. 21 at the age of 80.

His high-end Yonge Street clothing store, called Alan Cherry, which he took over from his parents in 1970, became an institution in the city, legendary for its bridal wear and for being one of the first to bring designer European labels such as Hugo Boss and Versace to Toronto.

Cherry prevailed in the fashion industry through the 1970s and '80s and subsequently opened a women's clothing store in Yorkville, where he worked until his health declined.

He was known for his impeccable taste and distinctive branding.

"You'd get a gold cherry tree inside your garment – it was under the [item's] label," remembered Wendy Mandelbaum, one of Cherry's three daughters.

Along with impeccable taste and business savvy, Cherry had trademark theatrical flair: he famously garnered attention for posing with a tiger for an ad, and in 1978, he made news for showing his wares to two dozen or so visiting Saudi Arabian princesses.

"He raised the bar of retail in Toronto beyond the grand retail legacy he was born into," Wendy said.

Cherry's grandparents immigrated from Russia to Toronto in 1906 and opened up a dry cleaning and tailoring business. The store later expanded to carry ladies' wear.

His mother subsequently continued the family clothing legacy, opening a clothing store on Danforth Avenue.

He grew up in the apartment above it, the middle child between sisters Linda and Joy, who also became clothing retailers, each with a store to their names.

Cherry attended Lawrence Park Collegiate and, according to his family, excelled in both artistic and athletic endeavours. He played hockey and worked as a lifeguard, and as a teen, won a sculpture contest sponsored by Eaton's department store.

"He had all this creativity that he put into his business," Wendy said.

Alan Cherry TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

When he was a young man, Cherry worked in his mother's store and showed keen interest in the industry. He eventually split off and launched his flagship store, on Yonge just south of Bloor Street.

"My brother will never be replicated. There isn't another human being that could be like him," said Joy, herself a former retailer of international high fashion. "With his creativity, retailing, athleticism – he was really an incredible man."

Cherry had three daughters with his first wife Rosalyn.

He was a competitive squash player with many awards to his name, and in 1980, he was Canada's No. 2-ranked player. Wendy said it was always important to Cherry to remain affiliated with the Young Men's Hebrew Association, even after he began to be invited to non-Jewish athletics clubs. "He was one of the first Jewish people [in the city] to be invited into non-Jewish clubs, and he set a precedent for that," she said.

Bob Saunderson, chair of the Bloor Street Business Improvement Area and a commercial real estate broker, said he always respected Cherry for his commitment to running his business on his own terms.

In the 1960s, he said, Cherry's store ranked among Creeds, a high-end furrier, and Holt Renfrew as the city's leading fashion retailers.

"He was one of the best merchants in the city, and I'd think even in Canada, at that time," Saunderson noted.

Saunderson said he was "forever trying to get Alan Cherry to move [his store] into a shopping centre," but "[Cherry] was a 'Main Street' retailer and he perfected that… He was very good at it and you couldn't argue with it."He praised Cherry for being "a perfectionist, always elegant" and "always fun to deal with."

Cherry was a survivor of lymphoma and, later, a stroke, but succumbed to a brief bout of pneumonia. He's survived by daughters Lisa, Wendy and Debbie and grandchildren Arin, Lauren, Lucas and Jake. ■

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Montrealers' satirical site exposes political blunders

JODIE SHUPAC
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***The True North Times* team, from left, chief marketing and strategy officer Daniel Etcovitch, outreach director Alexia Manchon, president and CEO Simren Sandhu, and Max Seltzer, editor-in-chief and chief operating officer.**
TRUE NORTH TIMES PHOTO

Despite the humble online presence it's had for the past two years, *The True North Times*, the brainchild of three precocious Montrealers, two of whom are Jewish, has surged in popularity after breaking the story of Hamilton federal NDP candidate Alex Johnstone's 2008 Facebook comment referencing the "phallic" appearance of electric fence posts at Auschwitz and former B.C. Liberal candidate Cheryl Thomas' anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish comments.

The Canadian political humour site's original article about Johnstone was published Sept. 22 as part of a special election series featuring blunders by candidates from Canada's leading political parties.

True North's editor-in-chief and chief operating officer, Max Seltzer, 21, said his team sent the piece to the *Hamilton Spectator*, which subsequently interviewed Johnstone and reported her now infamous "I didn't know what Auschwitz was" response to a question about her original post.

The story, and news of Johnstone temporarily stepping down from her role as vice-chair of the Hamilton-Wenworth District School Board, quickly went viral nationally, and *The True North Times* was widely credited with first reporting it.

Seltzer told *The CJN* that he and his colleagues have since been interviewed by outlets such as the *CBC*, *Global News*, *CTV News* and the *Guardian*.

On Sept. 30, *True North* exposed Thomas' reference on Facebook to mosques as "brainwashing stations" and remark that "the oppressed of the Warsaw ghettos and concentration camps have become the oppressors [in Israel-Palestine]."

"It's been a wild ride thus far," Seltzer said of the media attention.

In November 2013, *True North*'s president and CEO Simren Sandhu, now a 19-year-old third-year McGill student, along with chief marketing and strategy officer Daniel Etcovitch, a McGill graduate who just entered his first year at Harvard Law School, and Seltzer, a fourth-year student at McGill, seized on what they saw as a gap in the market for Canadian political satire.

They launched the site with a mandate to combat political apathy and make Canadian politics accessible and funny.

"We use [former *Daily Show* host's] Jon Stewart style of satire: taking real content and news and putting a little bit of a spin on it… making it funny, engaging and worth reading about," Etcovitch, 22, explained.

With a team of a dozen or so freelance contributors who write in a volunteer capacity, *True North* publishes fresh content daily and bills itself as non-partisan.

Its model includes analysis, opinion articles and features, as well as more creative content such as "The Nine Days of Scandal" election series, which exposed the gaffes of Johnstone and eight other candidates from different parties.

The list also included Stefan Jonasson, the NDP candidate for Manitoba's Charleswood-St. James-Assiniboia-Headingley riding, who compared haredim to the Taliban on Twitter, and Benjamin Dichter, the Toronto-Danforth Conservative candidate who posted a video on Facebook with the subtitle "Moslems and scums destroying everything in a area in Paris France."

Etcovitch stressed that *True North* has a mandate to showcase diverse opinions and "make fun of all parties equally."

He noted that the site has never called for a candidate to resign, but is just "giving the public information we think they should have."

As for *True North*'s track record in unearthing social media slip-ups, Seltzer said the team has a knack for investigative journalism and has put significant effort into digging through Elections Canada records, filing freedom of information requests and scrolling through politicians' Facebook and Twitter pages.

"Most people don't do a lot of research on their local candidates. We started doing it ourselves and were shocked at what we found… We quickly realized that [our election coverage] was going to be focused on, 'Can you believe what your local candidate said?'" Etcovitch said.

The site, which he said doesn't take much money to operate and is mostly funded through advertising, targets young Canadians.

Etcovitch attributes youth apathy to the fact many young people don't feel their vote makes a difference, as well as because Canada's political system doesn't allow for direct voting for prime minister and youth activism isn't featured in the media.

"We don't hear the issues young people care about and they're not lobbying because they don't care about [issues] in the first place. It's a vicious cycle," he said.

Seltzer emphasized that he and his colleagues at *True North* have enjoyed the recent attention, but will be getting back to their "bread and butter: making politics interesting." ■

Correction

A story in our Oct. 1 edition headlined "Court dismisses defamation suit by Canadian Union of Postal Workers" incorrectly stated that *Sun News* and the *Toronto Sun* issued apologies and retractions to CUPW for suggesting the postal union or its members were sympathetic to Hamas or supporters of terrorism.

The retractions cited in our story were requested by CUPW and referenced in a decision by the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. *Sun News* and the *Toronto Sun* did not issue the requested retractions. *The CJN* regrets the error. ■

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Israel once again contentious for Mount Royal candidates

JANICE ARNOLD
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Justin Trudeau does not share his brother's views on the Middle East and is not being advised by him, says Anthony Housefather, the Liberal candidate in Mount Royal.

In response to an audience question at a panel discussion among the riding's major party candidates, held by Bialik High School Sept. 30, Housefather attempted to dispel a recurring claim that the Liberal leader is under the sway of his brother Alexandre (Sacha) Trudeau, a documentary filmmaker.

The younger Trudeau's strongly political films offer a point of view on the Middle East not entirely compatible with the Liberal party's and certainly not with that of those with strong convictions about Israel. His most recent production was the 2012 *The New Great Game: The Decline of the West & The Struggle for Middle Eastern Oil.*

"Justin Trudeau has publicly said he disagrees with his brother and that he is not his adviser or playing any role in this campaign," Housefather said. The question, like all the others that evening, was submitted in writing anonymously.

The assertion that Alexandre Trudeau is influencing his brother is being made in the open as well. At a public event the week before in support of Mount Royal Conservative candidate Robert Libman and featuring former foreign affairs minister John Baird, a woman in the audience wanted to know why the alleged role of Alexandre Trudeau in the campaign was not being addressed. Neither Libman nor Baird directly commented.

Bialik High School students Kasey Wiseman, left, and Lexi Rubin talk to Mount Royal candidates Mario Jacinto Rimbao, left, Robert Libman, centre, and Anthony Housefather. JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

At the Bialik meeting, Housefather said he is "disturbed" by "anonymous emails circulating in this riding that make false allegations... Why would his brother's views reflect on him? It doesn't make sense."

Close to 200 people, many of them students, attended the discussion among Housefather, Libman and NDP candidate Mario Jacinto Rimbao, moderated by principal Avi Satov. Students submitted six of the questions posed to them, and the rest came from the audience. One from the latter was on the difference on Israel between Trudeau and Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Libman said that Trudeau's comments that Canada's "reputation on the international stage has been tarnished... and we should return to a more nuanced approach as an honest broker can be decoded as it's time to water down [support for Israel] in order to get along with the dictators at the UN."

Libman also criticized Trudeau's acceptance of the candidacy of Andrew Leslie in the Ottawa area riding of Orléans, because the retired general last year accused Israel of "firing indiscriminately onto Palestinian women and children" during the war in Gaza. Libman said Trudeau is being advised by Leslie on foreign affairs.

Housefather responded that Trudeau's "mentor" on Israel is outgoing Mount Royal MP Irwin Cotler, who was in attendance, and that his staff adviser is Marci Surkes, a Jewish woman from the riding.

"As Justin Trudeau said during the [Sept. 28] Munk [foreign policy] debate, Israel should not be used as a wedge issue for the Jewish community," said Housefather, who insisted there's no essential difference between the Liberals and Conservatives on Israel, and that his party is guided by principle. He cited public stands Trudeau has taken, such as on the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against Israel. "We all know the Muslim vote is greater than the Jewish vote, so why would he say that if he did not truly believe it? As for myself, I have an impeccable record on support for Israel."

Rimbao said he's sensitive to how Israel is an emotional issue for Jews, but the NDP believes Canada "should get back to its reputation for leadership in peace brokerage." ■

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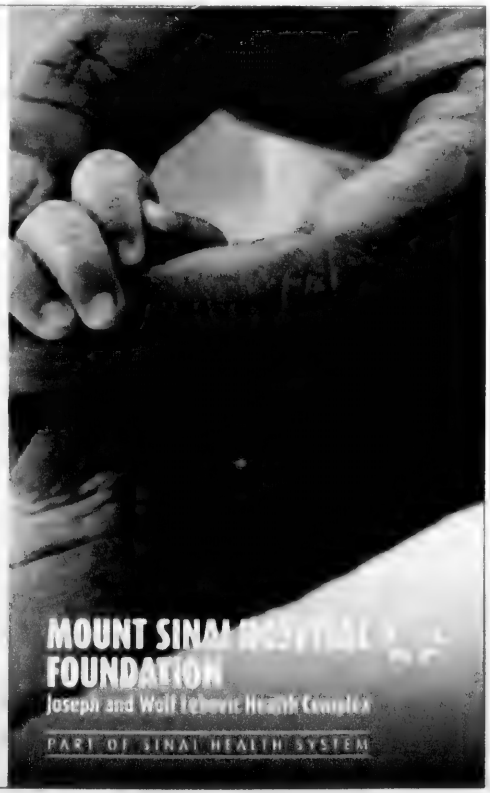

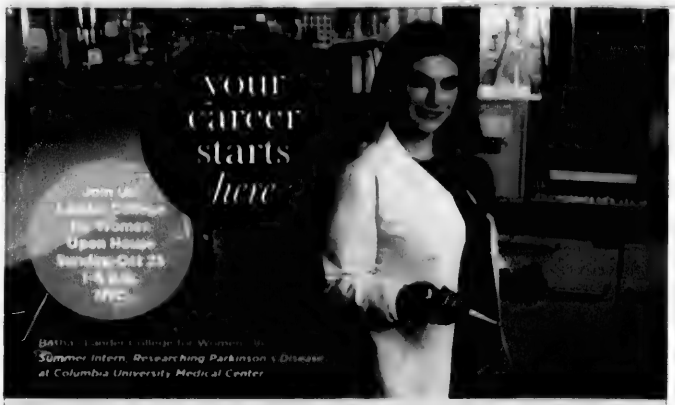

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Thornhill candidates face off on Jewish issues

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At an all-party debate for Thornhill candidates, Conservative incumbent Peter Kent, Liberal candidate Nancy Coldham and NDP candidate Lorne Cherry addressed issues important to the Jewish community, including the economy, Canada's relationship with Israel, Iran's nuclear deal and the rise in anti-Semitism and terrorism.

The Sept. 30 event, sponsored by B'nai Brith Canada and held at the Sephardic Kehilla Centre, attracted more than 200 people who gathered to hear from the candidates in advance of the Oct. 19 federal election.

Kent, who has represented Thornhill riding since 2008, began by touting Canada's economy, and boasted that it "emerged from the recession the envy of the G7 countries... Despite opposition attempts recently to talk down the economy and talk up tax hikes, this country is in growth."

But Coldham, a small business entrepreneur, challenged Kent's "mistaken view that we have a booming economy," adding that Canada has "the worst economy in 80 years."

Defending the Liberal fiscal plan that would see a deficit of about $10 billion for each of the first three years and then a balanced budget by the 2019-2020 fiscal year, Coldham said, "A significant infrastructure investment has been proven time and time again... to be the most efficient and impactful way that a government can stimulate the economy."

Cherry, also a small business entrepreneur, said Canadians "need a government that looks after 100 per cent of its population, not the top eight per cent."

He also challenged Kent's claim that Canada is the envy of G7 countries.

"The U.S. was in way worse shape than us, but now, our dollar is worth 75 cents to theirs."

Speaking about the BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) movement, Kent called it a "thinly disguised, multi-dimensional hate campaign" that targets the only democracy in the Middle East.

He said the BDS movement on campus is disruptive to students and his party has proposed a bill that would condemn the BDS movement and call on administrators of publicly funded universities to "take real and firm action against all forms of hate speech."

Coldham said the BDS movement is "un-Canadian and unacceptable," but added that she is "annoyed" by the misconception that the Conservative party is the only one that supports Israel.

From left, Lorne Cherry, Peter Kent and Nancy Coldham SHERI SHEFA PHOTO

She said there is a "lack of a clear position and framework for a strong Middle East policy and that would do a lot to help, not just the security issue, but collectively make sure that Israel is safe in this world."

Cherry said the BDS movement "is a touchy issue." He also addressed the misconception that the Conservatives alone stand with Israel, but said that the NDP takes a more "pragmatic" and non-hypocritical" stance.

Speaking about the rise of anti-Semitic incidents in Canada and abroad, as well as terrorism on Canadian soil, Cherry said "the only way we are going to combat anti-Semitism, hatred, discrimination, marginalization and sexual discrimination is through education, and education comes through dialogue.

"I myself, I have to admit, I was embarrassed when one of our candidates did not understand that Auschwitz was tied to the Holocaust. That is an education issue."

Coldham said addressing the issue takes much more than education and dialogue.

"I think we need a strong legislative framework," she said, and referred to retiring Liberal MP Irwin Cotler's Ottawa Protocol on Combating Antisemitism, an action plan that was developed in 2010 and received all-party support.

Speaking about the recent nuclear weapons agreement with Iran signed by the P5+1 nations, Coldham said, "This has been a weakness for the Harper government. Canada, yet again, had no say, and is not a player in the negotiations."

Kent said the Conservative government has long maintained that Canada will judge Iran on its actions rather than words and contradictory slogans.

He said U.S. President Barack Obama should have continued with the strategy of tightened sanctions and aggressive diplomacy because "they were working... But European greed in some quarters, new trade deals with Iran, and I believe, President Obama's fixation on a legacy deal in his lame duck year, has simply postponed an eventual crisis. President Obama has effectively... punted the crisis to his successor and the world." ■

Candidates clash in lively York Centre tilt

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

From left, Tory MP Mark Adler, Green candidate Constantine Kritsonis, NDP candidate Hal Berman and Liberal Michael Levitt.
RON CSILLAG PHOTO

It was a raucous night Oct. 1 at Adath Israel Congregation, where the federal candidates in York Centre riding squared off in a spirited debate.

Most of the two-hour affair, during which the audience had to be admonished several times to keep a civil tone, centred on Israel, anti-Semitism and terrorism. The evening was sponsored by B'nai Brith Canada.

Green party candidate Constantine Kritsonis touched off controversy early when he declared that Israel's incursion into Gaza last year "went too far." That earned boos and jeers, and a lecture to the crowd from moderator Marvin Kurz on democracy and freedom of speech.

Kritsonis called the Middle East "a complicated matter" and said Parliament should not be "a vehicle for a proxy war. We need to be neutral to be a peace broker."

He said the Green party does not endorse the boycott, sanctions and divestment (BDS) movement and he called on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to cease all settlement expansion.

Incumbent MP Mark Adler said his Conservative party "is very proud of its record" on Israel. To applause and cheers, he repeated Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2014 remarks to Israel's Knesset: "Through fire and water, Canada will stand with you."

Adler said his party has never had to dismiss a candidate for anti-Jewish or anti-Israel views – referring to the NDP's and Liberals' recent dropping of candidates who made controversial online postings – and has "never" voted against Israel at the United Nations.

He called the BDS movement "anti-Semitism, plain and simple," and said his government "will not tolerate it for one second."

Liberal candidate Michael Levitt touted his bona fides as a founding board member of the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC) and said "many things will change" under a Liberal government, "but one thing will not: we will always stand firmly in our support for Israel."

Support for Israel "is a Canadian value, not a Conservative value," Levitt said, and said Israel "should not be a wedge issue" in the election.

NDP hopeful Hal Berman, a palliative care physician, also said he rejects BDS — "not more or not less" than the Conservatives. He said criticism of Israel is not always anti-Semitic, and, in a barb directed at Adler, said claiming to be the son of a Holocaust survivor, as Adler had done on his campaign material until he changed it, "does not give you credibility."

Levitt also took a shot at the incumbent, saying Adler's now infamous remarks at the Western Wall, where he asked to be included in a photograph with Harper because it was "a million-dollar shot," turned "what should have been a proud moment into an embarrassment."

He earned cheers and boos when he said the Tories "have pitted Jew against Jew."

Adler struck back, saying "what is really embarrassing and shameful" are Liberal candidates such as Omar Alghabra, a former MP now running in Mississauga and a former president of the Canadian Arab Federation, a group the Tories defunded for allegedly supporting terrorist organizations.

Adler said "a balanced position" on the Middle East "is really code, and we won't stand for it."

Berman said a "monopoly on righteousness does not belong to the Conservatives." At one point, he lashed out at partisan audience members, saying he knows "six-year-olds who are better behaved."

Turning to Iran, Berman said the NDP will not condemn the nuclear deal reached with that country and, quoting former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, would pursue a policy of "trust but verify."

Adler slammed Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau for saying Canada will re-establish relations with Iran, "the largest state sponsor of terror in the world." Later, Adler said Canada must fight terrorism because "it is here," referring to last year's gun attack inside Parliament's Centre Block. "We're all Israelis now. That's what I told the prime minister."

On the anti-terrorist Bill C-51, Berman said the Tories "are trying to scare us into giving up our rights." He said an NDP government would ensure both security and the maintenance of rights. "We can have both."

Levitt said it was a Liberal government that enacted anti-terror laws after the 9/11 attacks. ■

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Parties court Jewish vote in Winnipeg South Centre

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Jim Carr

Joyce Bateman

It looks increasingly like the riding of Winnipeg South Centre – the Winnipeg riding with the largest number of Jewish voters – will once again have a Jewish Liberal representative in Ottawa after a four-year hiatus.

The riding had been represented for 11 years by Liberal MP Anita Neville, who was defeated in 2011 by former school trustee Joyce Bateman, running for the Tories. This time around, Bateman is in trouble, with polls showing Liberal Jim Carr, a Jewish former Liberal MLA, polling at close to 50 per cent support and Bateman trailing with about half that.

Bateman didn't necessarily help her case Sept. 30 when she appeared at a B'nai Brith Canada debate at the Asper Community Campus, along with Carr, NDP candidate Matt Henderson and Green candidate Andrew Park.

While Carr spoke about his life-long commitment to the Liberals and shared some of his experiences canvassing voters, Bateman drew loud groans for alleging the Liberals embrace terrorism and louder groans and cries of "Shame" for using her concluding remarks to mention Liberal candidates elsewhere who have been vocally anti-Israel or soft on Muslim extremism.

The debate consisted of five questions from moderator Dan Lett, a *Winnipeg Free Press* political columnist. The candidates each had two minutes to answer and one minute for rebuttal after all had responded. Responding to a question about Israel and the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, Park, an associate professor of ecology at the University of Winnipeg, slammed Israel for settlement expansion, called on Israel and Egypt to lift their blockade of Gaza and questioned the viability of the two-state solution.

He did note that the Green party doesn't support BDS, but is strongly in favour of free speech.

"We affirm the inviolable right of Israel to exist," he said "But that doesn't mean we subscribe to [Prime Minister] Stephen Harper's view that somehow Israel among all nations is immune to criticism."

Bateman spoke of the Harper government's strong support of Israel and forcefully condemned anti-Semitism, saying Israel is held to higher standards than other countries.

"Our government will always oppose the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement," she said. "We will also always oppose anti-Semitism, which is what BDS is really all about, just as we will oppose any attempt to delegitimize Israel, who is a friend and ally and… the only democracy in the Middle East."

Henderson said the NDP recognizes Israel's right to defend itself and suggested that at the local level, the community should get together with BDS proponents to determine the root causes behind the movement and try to find a solution.

"[NDP Leader] Tom Mulcair has come out clearly and used the words that the BDS movement is grossly unacceptable," Henderson said. "The NDP is a friend of Israel. We believe absolutely that Israel has the right to defend itself and that we need to maintain trade relations with the only democracy in the Middle East."

Carr spoke of the long history of anti-Semitism, noting his grandparents and great-grandparents came to Canada more than 100 years ago to escape it in Russia. "That is why for me Israel must always be a Jewish state. BDS is a new manifestation of anti-Semitism and we oppose it."

The rebuttal phase centred around Canada working with the UN for peace in the Middle East. Carr pointed out Canada's isolation on the world stage vis-à-vis Israel, pledging that Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau would work through the UN, but would never accept any resolutions calling for a boycott of Israel.

The second question concerned the Iran nuclear deal. Bateman outlined the Iranian regime's crimes against humanity and the Harper government's principled stands against dealing with Iran.

Henderson said the NDP believes that peace is better than war and Canada needs to reopen its embassy in Tehran to be able to monitor Iran to ensure it abides by the terms of the recent nuclear deal.

Carr said the chances of influencing Iran are better if Canada is talking to the regime, while Park said he thinks it's a mistake for Canada not to have diplomatic relations with Iran and sees potential for it to be an ally in fighting ISIS.

Another question about the government's anti-terror Bill C-51 drew the expected responses, with Park opposing the legislation, Bateman defending it and Carr saying a Trudeau government would amend it. ■

CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK

Munk Debate glosses over Israel. Is that a good thing?

Daniel Wolgelerenter

Is that all there was? Given how much praise – and criticism – the Harper government's strong support for Israel has attracted, it's somewhat surprising that so little was said about the Jewish state in the Sept. 28 Munk Debate on foreign policy in Toronto.

The night's only exchange on Israel, between Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau, came more than halfway through the proceedings, when Harper raised the topic, ostensibly in response to comments by NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair about working with allies on issues of global concern, such as Iran.

"I fully admit that we don't always take the position of our allies. Sometimes we take our positions based on what we believe are principles," Harper said.

"Let me give you a clear example. This government has been perhaps the most unequivocal in the world on the fact that when it comes to the Middle East, we are not going to single out Israel. It is the one western democratic ally. Threats that are... directed at that state – [it's] on the front line of threats directed against us. We are not going to single out the Jewish state for attack and criticism. We recognize unequivocally the right of Israel to be a Jewish state and to defend itself."

After applause, moderator Rudyard Griffiths asked Trudeau to respond.

"The issue of Israel where we most disagree as Liberals with Mr. Harper is that he has made support for Israel a domestic political football, when all three of us support Israel, and any Canadian government will," he said, also to applause.

And that was it – boilerplate statement against boilerplate statement. Given how support for the Jewish state has become so unnecessarily partisan, the relative quiet was refreshing.

That's probably a good thing.

Other "Jewish" issues figured prominently, with robust discussions on refugees and citizenship, for example.

Regarding the latter, Harper bragged about having revoked the citizenship of a convicted terrorist, while Trudeau countered that the Tories have created a "two-tiered" system and that "you devalue the citizenship of every Canadian... when you break down and make it conditional for anybody."

There's still time: Though there's only a week and half until the election, it's not too late to volunteer for the party or candidate of your choice.

Throughout the campaign, the Canadian Jewish Public Affairs Committee, (CJPAC) – whose mandate is "to engage Jewish and pro-Israel Canadians in the democratic process and to foster active political participation" – has been holding volunteer training workshops in various locations in the Golden Horseshoe, as well as information events in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. Final workshops, aimed at demystifying the volunteering process, are scheduled for Oct. 8 at Temple Anshe Shalom in Hamilton, as well as Oct. 13 at Beth Tzedec Congregation and Oct. 14 at the Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in the GTA.

The non-partisan CJPAC placed 900 volunteers in the 2011 federal election. Its officials say they don't track gender and ages – they will only say that the highest numbers came from Ontario, home to two-thirds of Canadian Jews – and they refuse, somewhat understandably, to disclose volunteers' party affiliations. All they'll say about the current campaign is that they're on track to place similar numbers with all the major parties.

On that score, it bears emphasizing that Jews should volunteer for the party in which they feel most comfortable. All the major parties support Israel, and none are in complete lockstep with "Jewish values," which are open to relatively wide interpretation. Furthermore, potential volunteers should not be intimidated by the current polarized atmosphere in the Jewish community, where some people are trying, unfortunately, to make Israel a partisan wedge issue.

Also, they ought not assume from past comments by NDP and Liberal candidates that have surfaced over the course of the campaign that these parties, or centre-left parties in general, are hopelessly anti-Jewish or anti-Zionist. Nevertheless, perhaps the lesson here should be that pro-Israel, Jewishly literate people must become more involved in these parties so that Jewish views are understood and well-represented across the political spectrum.

Bottom line? If you want to, get involved. ■

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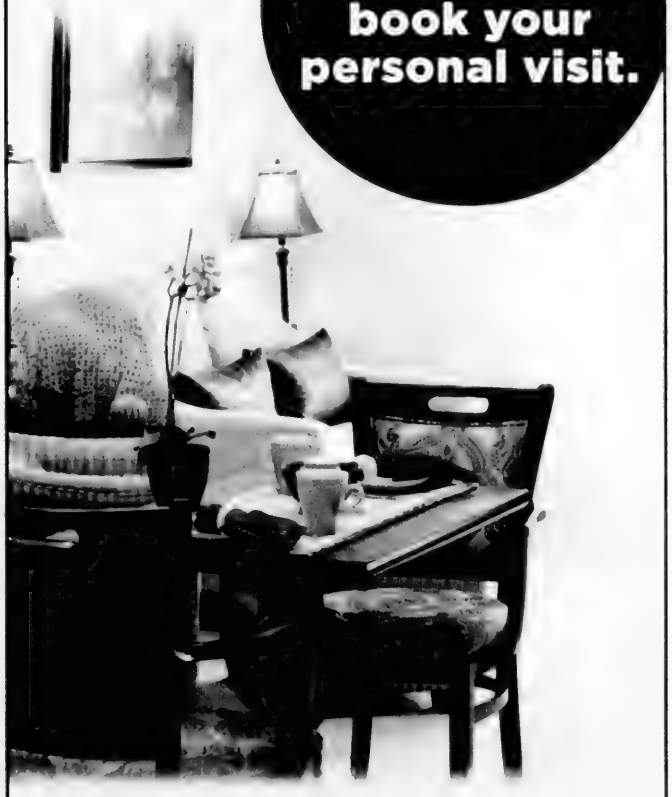

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Liberals, NDP target finance minister in CIJA debate

PAUL LUNGEN
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From left, Tory Joe Oliver, NDP candidate Hal Berman, and Liberal Bill Morneau. CIJA PHOTO

A debate featuring representatives of the three major parties got a little feisty on Sept. 30 as the New Democratic Party and Liberal candidates took turns targeting Conservative Finance Minister Joe Oliver on issues of economic performance, anti-terrorism legislation and support for Israel.

But Oliver gave as good as he got, questioning the Liberals' past record of voting against Israel at the United Nations and pointing out the NDP had some "problematic" members running in the election.

The debate was sponsored by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, and was held at The Warehouse Venue in Downsview Park. The debate was moderated by *The CJN*'s editor, Yoni Goldstein.

Both Liberal Bill Morneau, running in Toronto Centre, and NDPer Hal Berman, running in York Centre, took turns assailing the Conservative position that it uniquely supports Israel. Not so, Morneau and Berman said.

All the parties support Israel and the question of support should not become a divisive, partisan issue, Morneau said.

"We all support Israel," Berman agreed. Israel needs to understand that unless the Palestinians have a deal, there will be no peace. The NDP supports the peace process, he said, adding that "our country's reputation sucks now" because of the policies pursued over the last 10 years.

Oliver got in a dig at Berman and the NDP's position on Israel, saying, "You have some problematic members of your prospective caucus."

Turning to the Tories' position on the Middle East, Oliver cited the 2006 cut off of funds to the Palestinian Authority, the boycott of the UN's Durban II anti-racism conference and the prime minister's advocacy for Israel at a G8 meeting (in 2011 when the other countries proposed a resolution urging negotiations on the basis of the 1967 borders).

He also referred to the Canadian voting record at the United Nations under the previous Liberal administration, in which Canada supported resolutions condemning the Jewish state. And he stated that former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin – who Morneau said had reversed the trend of votes against Israel – had laid a wreath on the grave of Yasser Arafat. (Pierre Pettigrew, the foreign minister under Martin, laid the wreath at Arafat's grave in Ramallah, a few months after he attended his funeral.)

On the fight against ISIS, Oliver said the Canadian government is committed to continuing its participation in the coalition to degrade the Islamic State. He contrasted this position with that of his opponents, who he said want to run up the white flag of surrender.

Morneau said the Liberal position is to train local fighters to take on ISIS. "It's not a retreat."

Berman said the Conservative government had turned the country away from its traditional role as peacekeepers and into an aggressive country that drops bombs on civilians.

Both opposition spokesmen assailed the Tories' proposed bill to address domestic terrorism. Berman said the Conservatives are presenting a false choice between security and fear, while Morneau said that for all the posturing on domestic security, the Conservatives were spending less on security agencies and federal prosecutors than before. That prompted an interjection from Oliver, who disputed Morneau's contention.

Berman made the argument that "to have true security, we need to be respected... so people don't hate us."

There was a little drama in the Iran portion of the debate when Morneau asked Oliver for a yes or no answer to the question of whether Canada supported the P5+1 deal with Iran to limit its nuclear program. Despite Morneau's repeated request for a yes or no answer, Oliver said only, "We acknowledge the efforts of the P5+1."

Each of the candidates emphatically opposed the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement.

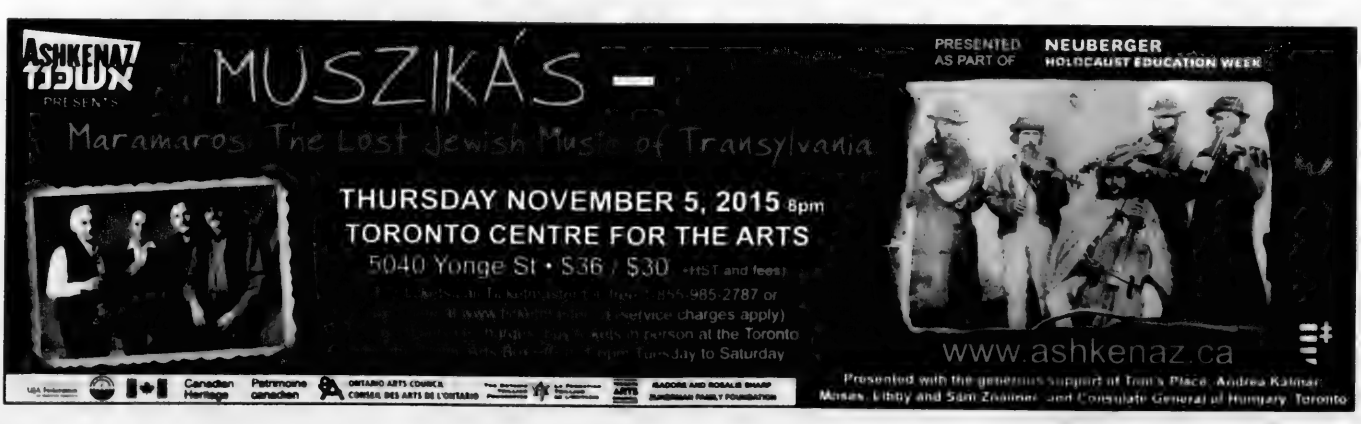
In introducing a question on genetic discrimination, Goldstein noted Jews' predisposition to diseases, such as cancer, that are linked to a person's genetic makeup. There is concern that insurers might deny coverage to people with the gene and that employers would avoid hiring such people. That could lead some to avoid the kind of screening that would reveal possible illnesses, he said.

Morneau said the Liberals had proposed a bill to prevent insurers from denying coverage or raising rates so high that people couldn't realistically get coverage. Oliver said that if re-elected, the government would reintroduce legislation preventing such discrimination and Berman, said such legislation would be a No. 1 priority for a New Democratic government.

On the question of poverty, Goldstein noted that about 15 per cent of Jewish Canadians live below the poverty line. Berman said the NDP has a strategy to lift 10,000 seniors out of poverty over four years. It will lower the small business tax to create jobs, it will launch a $15 a day daycare program with 100,000 spots to better enable women to enter the work force and it will put millions of dollars into affordable housing.

Morneau said the Liberal plan is to grow the economy and lift people out of poverty. A Liberal government would invest in transportation, affordable housing and green technologies. It would lower eligibility for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and Old Age Security (OAS) programs to 65 from 67. And it would remove the Universal Child Care Benefit, which goes to millionaires as well as lower income Canadians, and replace it with the Canada Child Benefit, which will raise 315,000 children out of poverty.

Oliver said that under the Conservatives, more than one million low-income earners have been removed from the tax rolls, including 400,000 seniors. The Tories have increased the GIS more than in the last 25 years, and they have extended the Universal Child Care Benefit to four million families. He said more than 180,000 children have been lifted out of poverty because of government policies. ■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Shabbat Project expects more participants this year

SHERI SHEFA
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Building on the momentum from last year's inaugural Shabbat Project in Toronto, organizers are gearing up for another successful run that will bring thousands of Jews from across the religious spectrum together to keep Shabbat and take part in Shabbat-related programs.

The Shabbat Project started in 2013 after the chief rabbi of South Africa announced at a Jewish leadership conference that he wanted to start an initiative that would have all South African Jews keep one complete Shabbat on a certain date.

Although his idea was met with skepticism, it quickly caught on and spread to more than 460 cities worldwide.

Howard English, marketing director for the Shabbat Project Toronto, which this year will be held Oct. 23-24, said there are about one million people around the world who are participating in the international event.

"So when someone participates in Toronto, they are actually participating in one of the largest Jewish unity initiatives ever. It's grown globally, and we're excited to be such a significant part of it," English said.

Women at last year's Challah Bake

"Last year, about 7,000 people participated directly in some way, by going to an event, by being hosted in a home, by volunteering. We expect even more participants this year and we know from our research that we had done with those who had participated how meaningful it was for them."

English said that last year, 43 synagogues in the GTA took part in the event, and he expects more to sign on this year.

"Whatever their level of observance, no one should feel alienated from this project. We respect anyone who wants to experience Shabbat as never before at a different level, and we will do everything we can to help them fulfil that objective," English said.

"Even for those who are shomer Shabbat, who observe Shabbat strictly, what we're saying is, it is obviously a wonderful thing to do, but all of us who are shomer Shabbat can always move toward a higher level of appreciation and experience," he added.

"So our emphasis this year is on experiencing something, being able to say that I tasted Shabbat, I absorbed Shabbat in a different way and a more substantial way than I have before."

Dena Bensalmon, director of the Shabbat Project in Toronto, said the grassroots project has been built from the ground up.

"We got some good advice from South Africa two years ago. They said, 'Don't get stuck on an organizational level,'" she said. "If you call an organization or school or shul, and they say they're not interested, that's OK, because the people within that shul or school or organization probably are interested. If you figure out a way to get to them, they'll figure out a way to bring it back to their school."

She said a 15-page shul resource package was sent to 98 shuls in the GTA.

"It includes everything from links, to an unofficial guide on how to keep Shabbat to ice breakers for teenagers who want to meet each other in the afternoon."

Although programming is still taking shape, some of the main events include a cholent cook-off and tasting on Oct. 19-20, the Great Big Challah Bake on Oct. 22 at the Scarborough Convention Centre, and Havdalah programs at various locations throughout the GTA on Oct. 24.

"At the Challah bake last year, we had 2,340 people and this year, we'll have 2,500. We had 1,000 on the waiting list last year, and I assume we're going to have 1,000 on a waiting list again this year," Bensalmon said.

"The challah bake is huge. It is without a doubt Canada's largest challah bake," English said. "There is a spirit to the event, which is very moving and life-altering for some of the women."

As for the programs being organized for motza'ei Shabbat, there will be a number of concerts and events held at various synagogues throughout the GTA.

"This year, rather than competing with synagogues that are organizing post-Shabbat Havdalah events, what we're going to do is list the events that are taking place and a Shabbat Project representative will be at all the major events to thank everyone for participating, and particularly the shul for performing this wonderful mitzvah of celebrating Shabbat," English said. ■

For more information, visit www.shabbatprojecttoronto.com.

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Baycrest gears up for furry variety fundraiser

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Baycrest's second annual Dogs on the Catwalk fundraiser, a free community-wide event in support of Baycrest's volunteer services and its pet therapy program, will be held Oct. 20 at the Winter Garden Theatre and will again be hosted by TV personality Jeanne Beker and her beloved dog Gus.

Some 40 dogs and their owners are raising money for Baycrest volunteer services, which runs the pet therapy program. A Dogs on the Catwalk web page has been created, along with individual pet profiles unique to each dog, with photos and stories. The dogs' human counterparts sent messages to their circle of supporters to help fundraise through their pet profile.

Last year's event was based on a tongue-in-cheek beauty contest.

"This year, we have changed it and will showcase our top fundraising dogs in a variety show. The Baycrest residents have been looking forward to this event all year," said Ian Leventhal, director of leadership gifts.

There will be three segments to the event: a fashion show; a celebrity-dog look-a-like contest and a concluding "trick-or-treat" segment that will showcase the dogs' talents.

Baycrest resident Ginger Howard-Freidman, left, therapy dog Jackson and volunteer Sharon Krieger NADER MASOUDI PHOTO

"With a fundraising goal of $75,000, we have raised $44,493.35 so far. That's 59 per cent of our goal," Leventhal said.

There are 2,000 volunteers who come through Baycrest at any given time.

"There are so many things that Baycrest wouldn't do or can't do without the volunteers, with all the services they provide. Pet therapy is one of a multitude of programs they furnish," Leventhal said.

There are two ways your canine friend can be in the show: either he or she is a registered pet therapy dog, or you can raise a minimum of $2,000.

"CutiePie Shiffman is our top fundraising star, raising over $12,000 so far, while Jack, Kitty, Tetley, Clancy, Moishie and Bobby have each raised more than $2,000. These dogs are all eligible to be in the show," said Leventhal.

"At Baycrest, we have run the pet therapy program for over 20 years, where volunteers and their dogs who have completed either Therapeutic Paws (training) or the St. John Ambulance program visit clients," said Karen Hirshfeld, Baycrest's professional practice chief for therapeutic recreation.

Dogs and owners in the program visit clients at the Freeman Family Day Centre, the Samuel Lunenfeld Mountainview Club and Baycrest, including palliative care, the Terraces of Baycrest, and the Apotex Centre Jewish Home for the Aged.

There is much literature and research that supports the use of pet therapy.

"In addition to the immediate 'in the moment' benefits we see when the dogs come to visit, such as improved mood, interaction and engagement, the literature also tells us that pet therapy can have a number of positive benefits for the residents after the visits are over. These include improved social interaction skills, coping and ability to communicate," Hirshfeld said.

Therapy dog Jackson is an eight-year-old poodle bichon.

"When I'm getting ready to take Jackson to Baycrest, I mention to him some of the residents' names, and his tail starts wagging in excitement and anticipation of his weekly visit – he recognizes where he is going," said his owner, Baycrest volunteer Sharon Kreiger.

While petting Jackson, Baycrest resident Ginger Howard-Freidman told *The CJN*, "I have these wonderful feelings of love, relaxation and happiness."

Every Sunday, Jackson can be seen pacing the fifth floor of the Apotex Centre.

"We go to concerts with the residents, we go to the gardens when the weather is nice, we talk together and we even play dominos. Jackson comes and sits down, and everybody pets him. If they can't reach him, I pick him up and he will sit in their lap. He loves it. He is Mr. Relaxation – Mr. Perry Como," Krieger said.

"Some of the residents even try to pinch Jackson's cheeks," she added with a laugh. ■

For more information, visit www.baycrest.org/dogsonthecatwalk.

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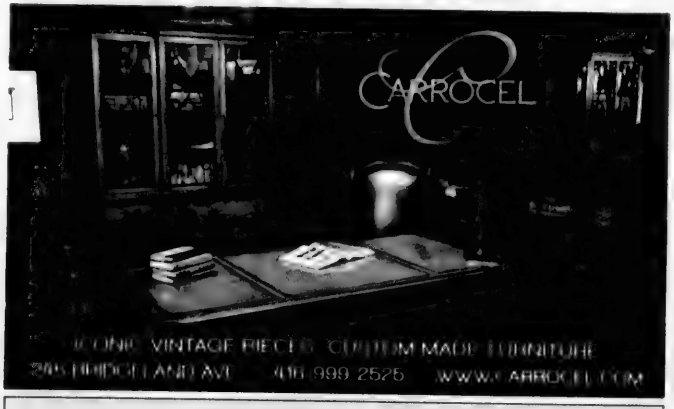

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GUEST VOICE

When it comes to the niqab debate, where are the Jews?

Danielle Kubes

Back before Canada was Canada, Aaron Ezekiel Hart was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada. In 1808, when it was time to swear an oath of allegiance to the Crown, he covered his head and placed his hand upon the Old Testament.

His peers kicked him out of Parliament the next day.

"Sorry," they said. "This isn't how we do things here."

Nothing personal or anything, the legislators argued, but it's offensive that while taking this respected office, you're choosing to display your Jewish faith over the Christian principles upon which this successful colony has been founded.

So the argument went then, and so it goes now.

Zunera Ishaq wants to wear a niqab to her Canadian citizenship ceremony. This 29-year old high school teacher from Pakistan is perfectly willing to remove her veil in a private room before a female officer to confirm her identity when dealing with the actual citizenship documents, but wants to keep her niqab on during the symbolic ceremony, because there will be men and photographers in the room.

The courts have defended her right to do so – twice.

How is it that Jews have not come out in mass support of Ishaq?

No country, nation or empire in the three millennia we Jews have been dispersed has been a refuge to us like Canada. Quebec, thanks primarily to the battle fought by Hart and his sons, gave us our full civil and political emancipation in 1832 – almost 30 years before anywhere else in the British Empire.

Jews are not ignored and reluctantly tolerated, like we were in ancient Rome and the Ottoman Empire. Here, today, our rituals are encouraged and defended, by law and the populace, even though many, just like Islamic ones, clash with those practised by "old-stock Canadians."

So although we may find Ishaq's desire to cover her face offensive, weird and not of this time or place, we must nevertheless insist that the same laws that protect us extend to her.

It doesn't matter if there's merit to the federal government's argument that the custom is "rooted in a culture that is anti-women."

So what?

Our customs, after all, are also derived from a patriarchal religion. Many married women in our community, for example, cover their hair because they are governed by the same principle of modesty that drives Ishaq. As long as we and her refrain from forcing other women to do the same, we must be allowed to clothe and unclothe our bodies as we wish, and the state must accommodate us to a reasonable degree.

This has been the basis of Canada's multicultural policy for decades and the reason that although we lend the widest latitude to our religious minorities, we experience the least conflict between them.

Those who fear that Ishaq's niqab represents a culture so contrary to ours that they cannot coexist, that if we cannot protect our borders from the danger of her veil, we must at least insulate our most sacred institutions, should recall that this fear is identical to the one Jews were subject to in 1808 with the Hart affair. It's the same fear that Sikhs faced in 1990 when they fought to wear turbans in the RCMP. The hysteria is familiar and tiresome.

Be assured that if we allow this fear to aim its arrow at Ishaq's dress, the archer's bow will soon be spun around to face us.

We will end up like South Africa and Sweden, unable to circumcise our infants, or like France, turning away our men from voting booths while they wear a kippah, or like Quebec, just two years ago, fighting to maintain our sons' right to learn in public school while also covering their heads.

When we support Ishaq's freedom, we support our own. And if we do not fight for Ishaq, who will be left to fight for us? ■

Danielle Kubes is a freelance journalist in Toronto.

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'Of course I'm tribal. But that hardly means I'm illiberal'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

If by the word 'there' you mean Judaism or its lack in the liberal Jewish world, you are correct."

"Great," I recall saying, "so what do I do now?"

"Go read Joseph Soloveitchik and then read his student, David Hartman."

I did as Rabbi Ellenson said. I read those two leading rabbinic thinkers again and again. That wholeness/hunger of mine was gradually replaced by learning, ideas, and intellectual and religious satisfaction. I had a core now – a Jewish one that allowed me to remain thoroughly modern all the while.

Love for the Jews and Zion, Hartman's especially, and awe of and curiosity about God, Soloveitchik's especially, have changed me as a Jew and as a rabbi. Year after year I revelled in the intellectual verve of both Soloveitchik and Hartman. Their thinking helped me create my personal Jewish ballast – an interior religious sensibility that has proved satisfying and sustaining.

What I learned from them went way beyond me. I began to believe that the best way to respond to what modernity had emptied out was for liberal Jews to be challenged and changed and solidified by traditional and engaging Jewish ideas. You don't have to accept them all, but you do have to know them. I believe that more than ever today, and much of what I have done as a rabbi has been to make this happen for other Jews.

Over time, I'd come to understand that the course I had set off on in the mid-1970s, one clarified by Rabbi David Ellenson and then inspired by rabbis Joseph Soloveitchik and David Hartman, was a kind of latent response to the hollowing out of the core of the Jews, first by assimilation and then by massive murder. The world of our grandparents and their parents had been vanquished. A rebuilding and refashioning of Jewish life – more than in numerical terms – was required. I wanted to be part of that.

If in our liberal precincts, we could steady ourselves internally with ideas and learning, buttressed by a deep and meaningful attachment to Am Yisrael (the people of Israel) and Medinat Yisrael (the State of Israel), then we might help steady and provide strength to the larger Jewish People.

Am I tribal then? Of course, I am! We have been decimated, we Jews in this 21st century. Much of our world, internal and external, has been destroyed in our lifetimes. Our Israel now is threatened as it hasn't been in decades.

Of course, I'm tribal. But that hardly means I'm illiberal, either in spirit or in deed. And so synagogues must be open communities, treating well and taking seriously every member, whether a part of us for 10 days or for 10 decades, whether known to us or not, whether recognized in our social milieu or not, whether strong of body or weak of spirit. Every Jew in our midst and beyond is worthy of our full regard. A religious community that does not honour this, in word and in deed, is neither religious nor a community.

This, too, is essential to cultivating a strong and transformed interior – to steady us personally with small acts of decency, to steady our people with inclusion of all in our midst, including those not Jewish who may wish to join the Jews. And, as much as anything, to strengthen ourselves with the literary and intellectual sustenance of the tradition.

• • •

Let me return to the story of Franz Kafka, the little girl, her doll and the inner transformation of the Jews. Ernst Simon, in telling the story, does so to demonstrate what he calls a "second naïveté" – that is, the sense of innocence necessary "to regain faith after having experienced the purgatory of secularization."

I understand this second naïveté as a chance to start over, to begin again without pretending you don't know what you do, without pretending what has happened hasn't happened. It's a chance to revive Kafka's experience and our own: to ensure the thriving of our own spirits and the survival of our own people. It's a way to provide necessary coherence, even as we understand the world is not necessarily coherent.

Kafka tried to do that for the little girl with a new doll. It is ours to do with learning, with ideas, with peoplehood and the love of Zion. Ours is an extraordinary inheritance, a great gift. It belongs to every one of us, every Jew. It's ours for the taking, and take it we must – for our sake, more than we can possibly even understand. ■

Edited and excerpted from Evolution of an Unorthodox Rabbi, *by Rabbi John Moscowitz, published by Dundurn Press. For more information, visit www.dundurn.com.*

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INTERNATIONAL

Benjamin Netanyahu stares down the world

DAVID HOROVITZ
NEW YORK

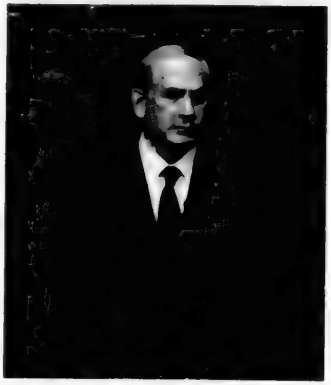
For 40 minutes at the United Nations General Assembly last Thursday, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu eloquently articulated the challenges posed to Israel and to the international community by Iran and by Islamist fanaticism.

He warned of the growing danger that Iran, "unleashed and unmuzzled," will constitute in the wake of its nuclear deal. And he castigated the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas for "libelling" Israel, from the same podium 24 hours earlier, by falsely asserting that Israel was seeking to harm religious freedom on the Temple Mount, when it was Islamic extremists who were desecrating the site by "smuggling explosives" into the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

But most dramatically, he rebuked the membership of the very institution where he was speaking – the United Nations – for tolerating Iran's relentless threats to destroy the Jewish state and "rushing to embrace" the regime.

"Seventy years after the murder of six million Jews, Iran's rulers promise to destroy my country, murder my people. And the response from this body, the response from nearly every one of the governments represented here," he charged furiously, "has been absolutely nothing. Utter silence. Deafening silence."

And then Netanyahu paused, staring defiantly, reproachfully out into the hall, head nodding slightly. For 44 very long seconds. In silent rebuke. And in apparent mourning for international morality.



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the United Nations General Assembly on Oct. 1. AVI OHAYON/GPO/FLASH90

The pause, the extended silence, was the theatrical centrepiece of this year's address. After his display of the Auschwitz architectural plans in 2009, and his presentation of a cartoon nuclear bomb in 2012, this was a prop-free gimmick, a wordless denunciation.

Like a biblical prophet, Netanyahu had come to warn, to chastise, and to indict.

As so often in recent years, he also used the occasion to deride the notion that Iran, under this regime, will abandon terrorism, rein in its rapacious regional intervention, or scale back its intercontinental ballistic missiles programs. Well-intentioned though it might have been, the nuclear deal will leave the Iranians "weeks" from a nuclear arsenal when its sunset clauses expire, he said bitterly. In the meantime, he asked, could anybody seriously believe that sanctions relief would "turn this rapacious tiger into a kitten?"

As in years past, too, he determinedly asserted his desire for a permanent peace with a demilitarized Palestinian state that recognizes the Jewish state. By announcing that the Palestinians no longer regard themselves as bound by the Oslo accords and other agreements with Israel, Abbas, this year, had made it a little easier for Netanyahu to assert that Israel was sinned against rather than sinning when it comes to the peace deadlock.

Again in common with previous appearances, he took pains to highlight the vital centrality of Israel's ties to the United States. Where President Barack Obama, on Sept. 28, had notably refrained from so much as mentioning Israel in his address, Netanyahu highlighted the bilateral relationship as "the most important that Israel has" and, however implausibly, asserted that both he and Obama consider their disagreements to be "within the family."

What was most strikingly different this year was the prominence and weight he gave to his assault on the international community's failed outlook, self-defeatingly skewed priorities and mistreatment of Israel.

He urged the world to at least hold Iran to the terms of the nuclear deal, deeply flawed though they may be. He encouraged the United Nations to help advance peace with the Palestinians – not via biased resolutions but by backing direct, bilateral talks. He pleaded for the UN to end its decades of "obsessive" Israel bashing. He sounded like a man of convictions, he did not sound like a man expecting to be heeded.

Bolstered by supporters in the gallery, Netanyahu found himself applauded for his sentiments with unusual frequency at this venue. But for all the ferocious anguish of his presentation, he knows that it will leave unmoved the overwhelming majority of global statespeople with whom he, and indeed much of Israel, are at odds. The Obama administration will not be recalibrating the nuclear accord. The French and the Germans will not be cancelling their trade trips to Tehran. The international community will not start making demands of the Palestinians. The numerous UN forums devoted to critiquing Israel will not henceforth reassess and devote more proportionate attention to Syria or any other crisis spot.

After a year in which the Iran deal was concluded over all of Netanyahu's loud objections, the Syrian civil war rages bloodily on, Islamic State continues its campaign of killing, and the Middle East remains predictable only in its chronic instability, Netanyahu is only too aware of how isolated he is. It is unlikely anybody will even have seriously registered his pledge that "Israel will not allow Iran to break in, sneak in, or walk in to the nuclear weapons club," and that "no one should question Israel's determination to defend ourselves against those who would seek our destruction."

The Israeli prime minister barked. The Israeli prime minister fell shamingly silent. But the UN caravan goes inexorably on. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

Israeli officials criticize PA leader's United Nations speech

TAMAR PILEGGI
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu slammed Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' Sept. 30 speech to the UN General Assembly as dishonest and accused him of having no intention of making peace with Israel.

"[Abbas'] speech is deceitful and encourages incitement and disaster in the Middle East," Netanyahu said in a statement shortly after Abbas declared to the UN General Assembly that the PA was no longer committed to prior agreements with Israel.

Netanyahu rejected Abbas' claims that the recent actions of Israeli security forces at Jerusalem's Temple Mount constituted an attempt to change the delicate status quo of the site, revered by both Jews and Muslims.

In his speech, Abbas had warned that Israel was in danger of turning a political conflict into a religious one. He accused Israeli "occupying forces" and "extremists" of attempting to divide the compound and preventing Muslim worshippers from exercising their religious rights. Israeli policies, Abbas warned, could lead to an "implosion" in the region.

"Unlike the Palestinians, Israel strictly adheres to the status quo on the Temple Mount, and is committed to continuing to do so in accordance with the agreements between Israel and Jordan and the Waqf," Netanyahu said in his response.

The prime minister urged Abbas to "act responsibly" and accept his offer from earlier in September to resume direct negotiations without preconditions. "The fact that he time and again has not responded is the best proof there is that he has no intention of reaching a peace agreement," he claimed.

Opposition leader Yitzhak Herzog also condemned Abbas' speech, while reserving criticism for Netanyahu as well. Herzog, who heads the Zionist Union party, said Abbas' references to Israel as an apartheid state were a "distortion" of the truth that would "only benefit the extremists on both sides." He also accused both Abbas and Netanyahu of engaging in "idle rhetoric."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Abbas accused of spreading lies and incitement

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"Israelis and Palestinians deserve the hope of a normal life," he continued. "Abbas and Netanyahu are leaders who are afraid of making decisions, and instead emit slogans and recriminations while leaving us to face a difficult situation and an uncertain future."

Herzog urged Israelis and Palestinians to "take advantage of a rare opportunity in the Middle East to forge alliances with moderate countries that want to be our partners against rampant Islamist terrorism."

Avigdor Liberman, the former foreign minister who heads the right-wing opposition party Yisrael Beytenu, dismissed Abbas' warning that the Palestinians would no longer abide by agreements with Israel.

"This is another empty speech with empty threats," he said. "In all his years as chairman of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas has incited against Israel and the Jews, and the sooner he vacates his posts, which he holds non-democratically and illegitimately, the better."

Education Minister Naftali Bennett charged that Abbas had presented his own false version of events during his address.

Mahmoud Abbas FLASH 90 PHOTO

"Abbas is returning to his days as a Holocaust denier, with a speech that rewrites history," Bennett said, in an allusion to Abbas' 1982 PhD thesis, which argued that the Zionists had collaborated with Nazi Germany to encourage Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked accused Abbas of "standing at the UN podium and spreading lies."

"While Israel maintains the status quo on the Temple Mount to the point of absurdity with a ban on Jewish prayer, Muslim rioters turn the Al-Aqsa Mosque into a warehouse for terrorism," Shaked said, vowing that Israel would "do everything necessary to preserve its sovereignty in Jerusalem."

The Temple Mount has seen a surge of clashes in recent weeks, with Palestinians accusing Israel of seeking to enable Jewish prayer there.

Culture and Sports Minister Miri Regev said that Abbas' speech demonstrated the Palestinian leader was the "true successor of the mass-murderer Yasser Arafat," and charged that he promoted an "anti-Jewish" and "pro-terror" agenda.

Regev said Israel would continue to build settlements in the West Bank as a way to combat "the delegitimization of the Palestinian Authority led by Abbas against Israel."

Ze'ev Elkin, the immigrant absorption minister, also countered Abbas' remarks, saying the PA had "long violated the Oslo Accords." Elkin said Abbas was responsible for continued "incitement" against Israel.

Tzipi Livni, a senior opposition member who used to be Israel's chief negotiator with the Palestinians, said diplomatic efforts such as Abbas' highly anticipated UN speech would work as leverage to force Israel to endanger itself.

"The speeches, the accusations, and the flags will not bring about a Palestinian state – only direct negotiations with Israel will do so," she said. "The attempt to make the international community force Israel to make sacrifices that would harm Israel's interests will not succeed and is doomed to failure."

Ayman Odeh, chairman of the Joint (Arab) List opposition party congratulated Abbas on his "brave stand" at the UN, adding in a statement that "Israel is to blame for the assassination of the Oslo accords with its repeated violations and attacks against the Palestinian people."

In his address, Abbas had said that the PA would cease to abide by agreements signed with Israel, including the 1993 Oslo accords, claiming Israel had shown that it, too, was no longer committed to them.

"So long as Israel refuses to commit to the agreements signed with us, cease settlement construction and release prisoners, Israel has left us no choice but to insist that we will not remain the only ones committed to these agreements," Abbas told the UN General Assembly in New York.

Israel, he said, must now "fully assume all its responsibilities as an occupying power... our patience for a long time has come to an end." ■

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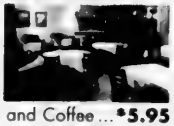

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Pro-Israel groups rail at EU plans to label products

ROBERT SWIFT
JERUSALEM

Indications that the European Union will soon adopt a recommendation to label Israeli products originating in the West Bank has spurred pro-Israel groups into action. One advocacy group fighting the EU's intended initiative, The Israel Allies Foundation (IAF), hosted a gathering of parliamentarians from Europe, South America and Africa at the City of David archeological site this week in an effort to fight the decision to label West Bank goods and to bolster opposition to the anti-Israel boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement, which it believes is behind the EU proposal.

Some politicians and activists have gone as far as condemning the EU act, suggesting a comparison to anti-Semitic acts from the World War II era.

"There are three elements to calls for boycott. First of all, university campuses; secondly, companies and thirdly, countries," Mark Pritchard, a British MP with the Conservative Party, told *The Media Line*. "With all three I would argue that... (they) need to recognize that Israel is a free and open democratic country in the Middle East, the only one in the (region)," Pritchard said. Like all of the visiting politicians attending the IAF event, Pritchard was firmly behind calls for BDS to be opposed.

Proponents of BDS have lobbied for the EU to change its policies towards Israel and to demonstrate opposition by its member states to Jewish communities being built over the Green Line – on land captured by Israel in 1967. Within a matter of weeks the EU may adopt a recommendation to its member states that goods produced in the West Bank imported into Europe be marked accordingly, a move reportedly advocated by the EU's foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini.

Pritchard explained that his motives for supporting Israel were linked to his belief in human rights. "There should be equality, equity, fairness, and social justice for everyone – including the Jewish People and the State of Israel," Pritchard said.

Other visiting politicians stated different reasons for their opposition to BDS. A number of those visiting Jerusalem were from center-right and Christian political parties.

The EU should not become involved in BDS as it has not taken sides in other political standoffs and would therefore be singling out Israel, Peter Ostman, a Finnish MP and the chairman of the Christian Democratic Parliamentary group, told *The Media Line*.

> *They need to recognize that Israel is a free and open democratic country in the Middle East*
>
> **Mark Pritchard, British MP**

Racism is the motivation behind the EU's planned treatment, Josh Reinstein, the director of the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus, said. "The campaign of BDS is classical anti-Semitism, it's the same tricks and storyline that they've done for hundreds of years. It's blood libel... just with a twist because they say 'Israel' instead of 'Jew' now," Reinstein said. The threat posed to Israel by such a boycott was significant, the director suggested, explaining that BDS had the potential to grow in both scale and impact.

Responding to criticism of the BDS movement, Sarah Colborne, the director of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), argued that in effect the international community is allowing Israel to continue its actions in the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip with impunity. This, she argues, despite a United Nations resolution calling for an end to such practices and an accepted international norm that the Geneva Convention forbids collective punishment, as demonstrated by the siege of Gaza.

"(PSC) has long campaigned for the labelling of products from the illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank... The UN says the settlements have no legal validity and the EU judges them to be the single biggest obstacle to peace," Colborne asserted. She suggests that any boycott of Israeli goods is a peaceful form of resistance and emulates sanctions placed against the South African government during apartheid, "its aim is to bring about... freedom, equal rights and justice for Palestinians and Israelis."

The EU is expected to make a decision on the labelling of products in the coming weeks. If the proposal is accepted it will merely be a recommendation and will not be binding on the EU's 28 member states. ■

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themedialine.org

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Thousands pay their last respects to slain Israeli couple

MARISSA NEWMAN
JERUSALEM

Thousands of mourners gathered in Jerusalem for the funerals of Eitam and Naama Henkin, who were shot to death in the West Bank on Oct. 1.

Speaking at the funeral on Oct. 2, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin emphasized Israel's sovereignty over the West Bank and said settlement construction would continue. He stated that, in the same way that Israel never built because of terror, it wouldn't stop building because of it.

The Israeli couple, in their early 30s, and their four children were ambushed while driving between the settlements of Itamar and Elon Moreh, when two Palestinians opened fire with a handgun and a rifle. Both parents were struck multiple times in their upper bodies, paramedics said. They were pronounced dead at the scene. The children, aged nine, seven, four and four months, were unharmed.

In his eulogy, Rivlin said Naama Henkin had sent him a letter after the murder of Danny Gonen, 25, in a June terror attack in the West Bank, and signed it "A citizen who cares."

"I replied to you. I told you that the land is ours in its entirety, and under our sovereignty it is our responsibility to see to its security and the security of our citizens," he said. "I promised that I would continue to embrace the terror victims and visit every home in which the lights have been extinguished forever. I didn't think, it didn't occur to me, that your light would go out, and I, we, would embrace your children."

A woman mourns at the grave of murdered Israeli couple, Naama and Eitam Henkin after their funeral in Jerusalem last week. YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

Eitam Henkin was the son of Rabbi Yehuda and Chana Henkin, who moved to Israel from the United States in the 1970s. His mother, Chana, runs the Nishmat Institute, a Jewish learning institution that was one of the first to teach women Talmud and Jewish law. Rabbi Henkin, a noted Torah scholar and author of several volumes of responsa, also serves as the school's Jewish law authority.

"Now we, the grandparents, will raise the children," Chana Henkin said at the funeral. "Eitam and Naama, we'll raise them as you would have."

Eitam's mother added that her son was "innocent and modest, happy, and idealistic" and praised his writings on matters of Jewish law.

"Since you found your magnificent Naama, I don't recall you complaining about anything. It was amazing to see the powerful love between the two of you, the total dedication to your children," she said. "Naama, you entered our family 12 years ago, and from the first moment, we loved you."

Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon toured the site of the attack with Israel Defence Forces Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot and Shin Bet chief Yoram Cohen and vowed the terrorists would be swiftly caught.

The security forces will "spare no efforts to arrest the killers and their sponsors," Ya'alon said.

The terrorists fled the scene after the terror attack, prompting a manhunt in the area. A unit within Fatah's armed wing assumed responsibility for the attack.

Hundreds of Israelis marched near the scene of the shooting, and urged the building of a settlement outpost in the Henkins' memory, Israel Radio reported. ■

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Jewish Life

Lakes of Canada album inspired by classic Atwood tale

DANIEL KOREN
dkoren@thecjn.ca

In 1985, iconic Margaret Atwood penned one of her most influential works to date. *The Handmaid's Tale*, set in a dystopian future where Christian theocracy has overthrown the government. The novel deals with segregation based on gender, race, and class, but specifically focuses on women, envisioning a society where feminism has been reversed, and females are stripped of their basic human rights.

Some 26 years later, Jake Smith, frontman of Montreal's Lakes of Canada, was rummaging through his mother's bookshelf when he stumbled upon the novel in unfortunately tragic circumstances. A year earlier, Kathleen Smith was murdered in her home, and it had fallen upon her son to tidy up her belongings.

Smith, mesmerized by the book's themes, could not put it down. Its inspiration led him to write one song after another until it became apparent that he had enough material for a concept album. The result is *Transgressions*, Lakes of Canada's sophomore effort, a record that is quintessentially Canadian.

"I've always been a big fan of speculative fiction," Smith tells *The CJN*, "and given that it centres around women, the book spoke to me, because I was still reeling from a violent act toward my mother."

According to Smith, he and his mother were "probably more close than most children are with their parents." Though he describes his upbringing as culturally Jewish at most (he did meet fellow co-founder Conor O'Neil in synagogue), it was after his mother's death that he really connected with religion.

"I think one thing Judaism does really well is mourning, as it's quite the opposite of moving on. Someone died, so you're going to pray for them and spend time with family, and I observed all of that. I found it really helped me connect not only with the memory of my mother but with my faith."

Smith then recalls a time when his rabbi asked if he believed in God. "Not exactly," he replied, "but I do believe in love and family and connection," to which the rabbi replied, "that's great." Smith appreciated that his rabbi didn't push religion on him, just as long as he was asking questions and had some kind of faith. "People have to discover faith on their own," he says. "It's a lot stronger that way."

While Lakes of Canada described their debut as "a cross between Fleet Foxes and Simon and Garfunkel," *Transgressions*, out next week, is anything but. Smith explains that the shift was something they wanted to do, but also necessary to record their new album. "We felt we had to pay sonic tribute to the subject matter, and started to incorporate all these different elements," he explains. "We listened to a lot of religious music, and a lot of gospel while recording."

It shows.

Naturally, writing a concept album is an entirely different affair than penning your standard LP. "I find that concept albums are more cohesive, more interesting. There's been a trend as we live in the age of singles that has been moving away from that. But when you're trying to write a cohesive piece, it becomes easier because you can transition better. It just flows."

During the process of writing and recording *Transgressions*, the band reached out to Atwood, to let her know that they sought to introduce *The Handmaid's Tale* to a new generation.

"She was really encouraging. We're going to send her the record next week, which I'm both excited and terrified of doing. Her opinion of the record is more important to me than pretty much everyone else's."

In explaining *Transgressions* to Atwood, the band called it "fan fiction" as there are aspects of the record directly lifted from the book. But the album also continues the story after it ends. "We have songs about what happens after Gilead [the military dictatorship formed within the United States where the novel is set]," Smith says.

The band also re-orchestrated the entire album as an acoustic version, which will be released with an accompanying documentary later this winter. "There's a fundraiser we did for a local women's shelter that will tie in with the release of that, and we'll be donating a portion of sales to the shelter as well." ■

Lakes of Canada frontman Jake Smith, second from left, with the rest of the Montreal band.

Ethiopian singer got her start in IDF band

Ester Rada
OHAD ROMANO PHOTO

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Israeli-born singer Ester Rada and her hot band brought their invigorating blend of Ethiopian jazz, R&B and funk to Toronto recently for the city's 14th annual Small World Music Festival.

Rada, a soul singer who's of Ethiopian heritage, forged her sound after completing her army service singing Israeli pop songs in an Israel Defence Forces band. With the release of her debut EP in 2013, she became an overnight sensation. Rada's stop at Toronto's Revival Bar, where she performed for a good-sized, enthusiastic crowd, was part of a three-month world tour.

Rada sang in English, Hebrew and Amharic, performing selections from her mostly self-penned 2014 full-length recording *Life Happens*, including the catchy song of the same name. Also from the album, the reggae-influenced *Sorries* stood out, as did Rada's rendition of *Nanu Ney*, a traditional Ethiopian chant she sang in Amharic. Rada, whose voice has echoes of Nina Simone's, performed a compelling version of *Feeling Good*, a song Simone covered.

What made Rada's set less than perfect, though, was that her six-piece band, a group of superb musicians, often drowned out her vocals, a glitch that could be attributed to the club's sound system. Rada spoke little during her set, but the powerful singer did tell the audience that she and the band were bringing Toronto love from Israel.

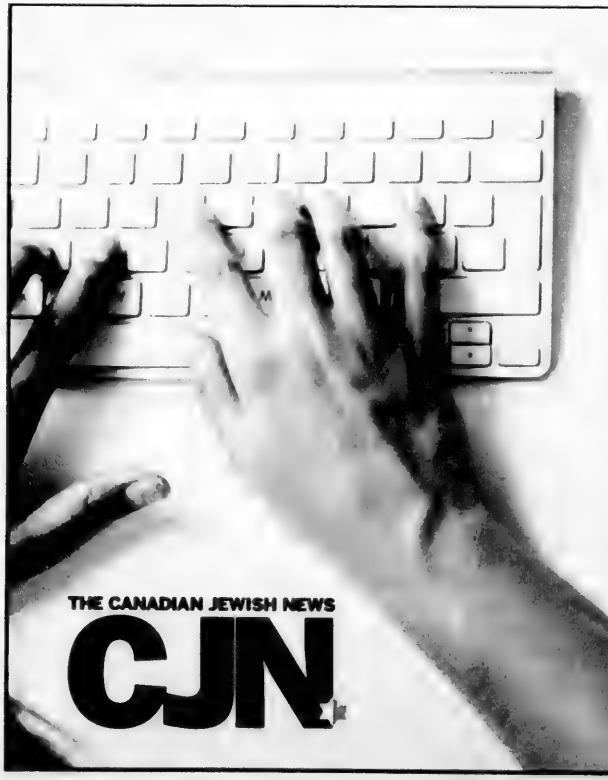
She was born there in 1985, in Kiryat Arba, a Jewish settlement outside Hebron. A year earlier, her parents, Falash Mura, descendants of Ethiopian Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity, had been flown to Israel from Africa through Operation Moses. Rada listened to Ethiopian music at home and sang in a synagogue choir. When she was 10, her family moved to Netanya.

"We lived in a very religious town, Kiryat Arba. During my childhood, I was in the synagogue a lot. I was very religious. Only at the age of 10, when we moved to Netanya, I discovered there was a whole world I didn't know before," she told the *Vancouver Sun* last April. Living in Netanya, she discovered the singers who are her main influences, Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, Erykah Badu, Lauryn Hill, Jill Scott and Alicia Keys, as well as jazz artists Ella Fitzgerald and Simone.

At 20, when she was discharged from the army, Rada started singing as a solo performer and embarked on an acting career, appearing on stage, on Israeli television and in movies. She was nominated for an MTV Europe Music Award for Best Israeli Act, she's performed at England's Glastonbury Festival and she opened for Keys in Israel.

Rada told the *Vancouver Sun* that her next career goal is to "keep performing and affecting people's hearts all over the world ... to keep growing and learning and loving, and making music."

She lives in Jaffa with her husband, Gili Yalu, the singer of Zvuloon Dub System, an Israeli reggae band. The Small World Music Festival presented Rada's Toronto show in association with the Koffler Centre for the Arts and the Batuki Music Society. The concert was sponsored by the Israel Consulate General, Toronto and Western Canada. ■



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'But what the hell is it in Yiddish?' (and other questions)

Chaimie and Leizer

Jews love questioning. It's genetic (see Moses, Job, our forefathers, our actual fathers). And we love questions (see Passover's Four Questions, "If I am not for myself…", "You call that smoked meat?").

While our chutzpadike Yiddish comedy *YidLife Crisis* can be seen as taking the pish out of organized religion, it came from a place of love and respect for Judaism's encouragement of questioning, from shuk bargaining to debating with God himself about his own existence! Can you believe the chutzpah? (also a question)

We ourselves have been asked many questions about our show along the way, but the most recurring is "Why Yiddish?"

Like all good Jewish questions, this one has more than one answer.

At first, our instinct to use Yiddish was visceral. Yiddish sounds funny both to Jews and non-Jews. Its cadence, vocabulary, dynamics, they're just funny. It is hard from the comedic standpoint (where we stand) and not the academic standpoint (where we don't stand unless we're told) to articulate why that is, but we feel like most would agree.

As we realized we would do "Seinfeldian" conversations and debates – albeit not 'about nothing' but rather the very meaning of what it is to be a Jew in the 21st century – a theory emerged. We wanted to pay tribute to our comic heroes and greatest influencers – Larry David, Jon Stewart, Mel Brooks, Joan Rivers, Jackie Mason – and decided that all of them were essentially performing Yiddish vaudevillian comedy, just in English (kind of like their surnames, their Anglo exterior concealing a rich Yiddish tradition). The cadence, the physicality, the gesticulations, the very phrasing of the humour was inherently Yiddish. So we would reverse engineer it back into the language in which it 'should have been done.'

Part of our mandate was about bridge building within and outside of our community. Since we intended on setting our "love letter à Montréal" in the Mile End, where cultures collide and where the perception of Judaism may be somewhat narrow, we wanted to portray a different view of Judaism than usually seen there, speaking the very language heard around that shtetl – a language, it should be noted, that was once the third most spoken in Montreal – but purposed in totally multicultural contexts (i.e. spoken while eating poutine at La Banquise), as Yiddish had existed in non-orthodox contexts for years.

But more to the point, we received a great compliment when questioning our own Yiddish abilities (and trust us – others happily questioned with us.) An Orthodox rabbi from Montreal, and native Yiddish speaker, moved us when he said that "Yiddish is not just a language, it is a lens through which we view the world, and in that, you guys are fluent." And that meant the world to us because, at its core, that is what our show is, and what we feel that Yiddish is – a culture, a shared story, a history, a people, complete with all its wisdom and suffering and neuroses and kvetching and kvelling – all embedded within the language. It uses the Hebrew alphabet, our ancient holy language, and combines it with the eastern European diasporan experience, from Germanic roots to Slavic countries, and for the future, anywhere else we go. It contains it all. It is religious-ish and secular-ish – just like us. And it's beautiful. And, yes, hilarious.

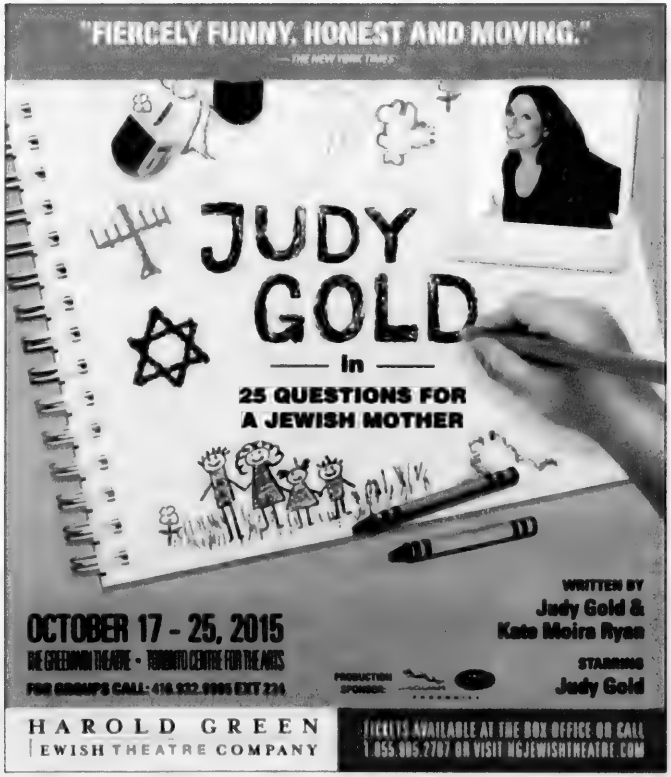
And as we approach the secular festival of Thanksgiving and pause for a moment of reflection, we thank those that helped make our show possible and watch it, and reflect on the question:

Why Yiddish?

The definitive answer, of course, is, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?"

So we answered with a question. What are you going to do? ■

Chaimie and Leizer are Jamie Elman and Eli Batalion, co-creators of the world's first online Yiddish sitcom YidLife Crisis.



Klezmatics to headline Winnipeg's first-ever KlezFest

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENCE, WINNIPEG

KlezFest is coming to Winnipeg on the weekend of Oct. 10 and 11 and co-producers Bev Aronovitch and Miriam Bronstein are anticipating a warm Winnipeg welcome for the first-time event.

"The Saturday evening concert by The Klezmatics sold out quickly," Aronovitch says. "That's no surprise considering our community's deep appreciation for Jewish culture. We're expecting the Sunday afternoon concert to sell out, too – and we already have 75 local singers, dancers and musicians booked for the Sunday morning workshops."

In addition to The Klezmatics from New York, Winnipeg's KlezFest will feature Montreal-based vocalist Janie Respitz and Winnipeggers Myron Schultz, Daniel Koulack, Kinzey Posen and Shayla Fink, four of the six members who founded the popular Winnipeg klezmer group Finjan.

Bronstein and Aronovitch are both longtime music teachers – although Aronovitch is best known for having founded the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre 27 years ago. Bronstein's teaching career was largely in the Jewish school system here.

The Klezmatics perform in Winnipeg this week

Aronovitch was inspired to create KlezFest after attending the annual KlezKanada in the Laurentians in the summer of 2014.

"It was the most amazing experience," Aronovitch says of KlezKanada. "I had been more involved with jazz the last few years. I had lost touch with my connection to Jewish music. KlezKanada reconnected me with my Jewish musical roots.

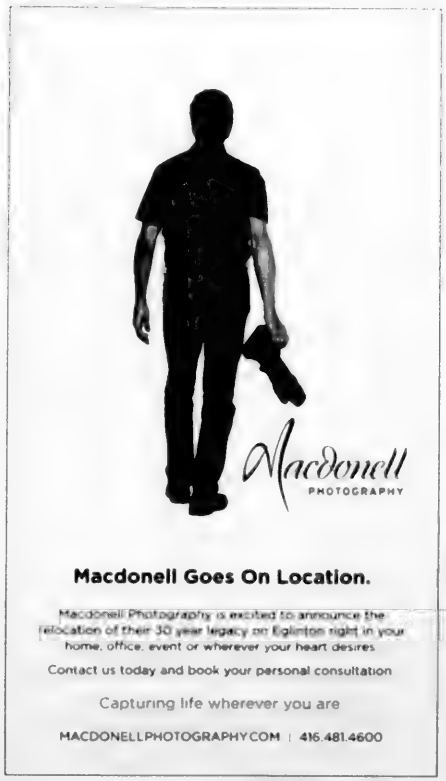
"I persuaded Miriam that Winnipeg would be a perfect place for a KlezFest."

Aronovitch notes that the Sunday morning workshops will revolve around the theme "Common Roots: a Musical Journey Through the Shared Roots of Klezmer and the Music of Other Cultures."

The KlezFest faculty, she says, will be led by the four Finjan members, Klezmatics' Frank London and Lorin Sklamberg, Respitz, and Yiddish dance expert Steven Weintraub from Philadelphia, who was previously in Winnipeg for a conference that was organized by the Manitoba International Folk Dance Association.

"The workshops have been designed to be interactive and informative," Aronovitch says. "Musicians will be able to play along with workshop leaders and everyone will have a chance to sing and dance."

Klezmer Jam, the final concert on Sunday afternoon, will showcase all of the klezmer performers. ■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Singer pays tribute to Frank Sinatra's music

MARVIN GLASSMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

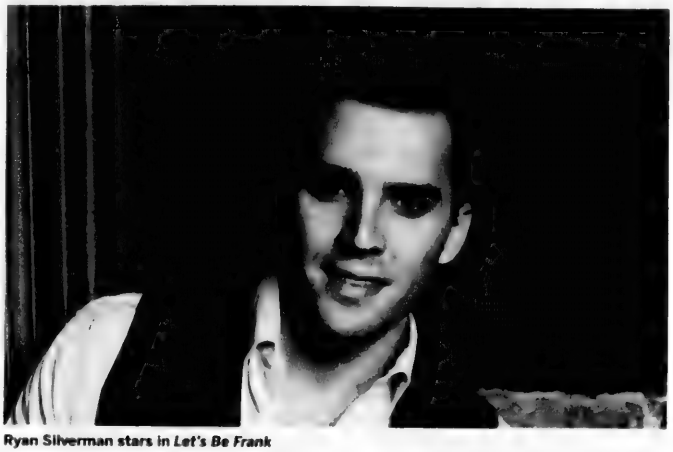
Broadway singer Ryan Silverman teams up with three other singers in a Toronto Symphony Orchestra tribute to the 100th birthday of singer Frank Sinatra, taking place Oct. 13 and 14 at Roy Thomson Hall.

"The music of Frank Sinatra is essentially the voice of the most beloved songs of America in the 20th century. Frank Sinatra not only made songwriters famous for his vocal interpretation of songs, but also for re-arranging the songs to introduce them again as he became mature," said Silverman in a phone interview from his home in New York.

Silverman teams with singers Storm Large of Pink Martini, Tony Desare, and pianist Frankie Moreno in offering unique vocal interpretations of Sinatra hit songs, including *Luck Be A Lady, My Funny Valentine, My Way* and *New York, New York*. Silverman's contribution to the concert will include up tempo arrangements on the songs *Just In Time* and *Moonlight Becomes You* and he will sing a less popular Sinatra song titled *Love Till I Die*.

"Although not all of Frank Sinatra's songs became radio friendly hits, his interpretations were unique, and I wanted to perform *Love Till I Die* so the audience can hear how special this song was."

Silverman's rich, sultry voice has been heard in a number of Sinatra tribute concerts, which took place in such venues as Carnegie Hall in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington, Atlanta, Indianapolis and Westchester, N.Y.



Ryan Silverman stars in *Let's Be Frank*

"What makes the Sinatra concerts so much fun is that the vocalists have an opportunity of changing the arrangements of the songs as Sinatra often did to make the song sound new."

Born in Grande Prairie, Alta., Silverman considers himself lucky to have become one of the few Canadians to have made a name for himself on the Broadway stage.

When not on the road with Sinatra tribute concerts, Silverman is currently cast as Billy in the musical *Chicago*. He has also been on Broadway playing Raoul in *Phantom Of The Opera* and Tony in *West Side Story*.

Other theatrical credits include national tours of *Grease, Mama Mia* and *Wicked* among other musicals.

"Everything happened by accident. I did not plan to be on Broadway. In fact, I wanted to be a radio disc jockey and so my plans changed as offers came to me," said Silverman.

He was adopted as a 10-month-old child to parents of French and Irish heritage. Although his adoptive parents let Ryan keep his birth name of Silverman, he was not raised Jewish by his adoptive parents.

"My birth mother gave me up when she had me at age 14. From tracing my roots, I discovered that my paternal grandfather was from Romania and is Jewish. He did not raise my father as Jewish and I do not know what the circumstances were for him not to be raised in Judaism."

Although many in show business mistake Silverman for being Jewish, he is proud of knowing about his Jewish roots and was happy to be cast as Mendel in the William Finn musical *Falsettos*.

Silverman sang the song *Four Jews In A Room Bitching* in the musical.

Following his graduation from McEwan University in Edmonton, Silverman considers his big break in musical theatre was to be cast in the musical *Blood Brothers*.

"I was fortunate. The casting director in *Blood Brothers* thought I was better than any of the other actors who auditioned. Once I had a visa for working in the United States, I went to live in New York."

The 37-year-old musical theatre star followed up his role in *Blood Brothers*, a musical with dark, dramatic overtones with a comic twist, as one of the three fathers in the musical *Mama Mia*.

Silverman stars in *Let's Be Frank, a tribute to Frank Sinatra on his 100th birthday* with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Oct. 13, 8 p.m. and Oct. 14, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. For tickets, call 416-598-3375 or go to www.tso.ca ■

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SHANE DANIEL KLEIN M.D.

We wish to gratefully acknowledge and thank all of our friends and family who supported and comforted us during the time of the tragic loss of our beloved son Shane. The tremendous outpouring of support has been overwhelming and much appreciated. To honour Shane's memory, beautiful spirit and incredible life in a deeply meaningful way, as well as to carry on his legacy of living a life of purpose and healing others, we have established and funded:

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Félix et Meira is Canada's Oscar consideration

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Félix et Meira, a tender movie about the improbable adulterous affair between a young Chassidic mother and a francophone Quebecer, has been selected to represent Canada for consideration as a possible nominee in the best foreign language film category at the Academy Awards to be held in February.

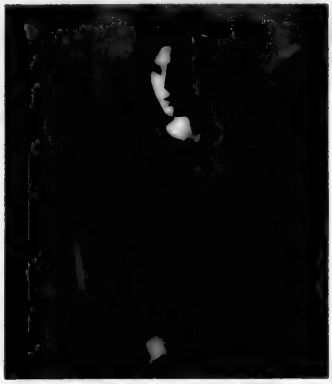
Directed by Montrealer Maxime Giroux, Félix et Meira premiered at the 2014 Toronto International Film Festival where it won the award for best Canadian feature film. It tied for the top prize at Montreal's Festival du Nouveau Cinéma last year.

Since then it has screened at more than 50 festivals around the world, winning more awards, and has enjoyed theatrical success in Canada and the United States.

"*Félix et Meira*, a love story about two people from vastly different worlds, has moved Canadian and international audiences," said Carolle Brabant, executive director of Telefilm Canada, in making the announcement on Sept. 25. Telefilm Canada, a federal agency, chairs the Canadian Oscar selection committee.

Although the subject matter may be scandalous, Giroux sensitively handles the genuine feelings between the couple and is respectful in the depiction of Chassidim and their way of life.

The cinematography of Montreal's Mile End and Outremont neighbourhoods is alluring, and the scenes of Chassidic life, rarely witnessed by the public, quite authentic.



The Israeli Hadas Yaron co-stars in Félix et Meira. JULIE LANDREVILLE PHOTO

Much of the film's appeal is due to the understated performances of the Israeli actress Hadas Yaron (Meira) and her betrayed and bewildered husband Shulem, played by Luzer Twersky, an American actor who grew up in a Chassidic community in Brooklyn, which he has left.

Despite his carefree persona, Félix (Martin Dubreuil), a bachelor approaching middle age, is adrift and melancholy, especially since his wealthy father's death. Meira chafes at her restricted role and husband's gentle, but domineering, ways, and eventually succumbs to a strange man's ardent pursuit.

> *We never imagined that the movie would be so successful.*
>
> **Director Maxime Giroux**

Giroux, 39, has been fascinated by his Chassidic neighbours since he moved into Mile End a decade ago,especially because of their insularity and his inability to communicate with them. The research he conducted to understand them better eventually laid the foundation for the movie.

He described the title characters as "two marginalized people, two fragile beings who are attracted by the unattainable, the forbidden fruit."

Above all, he said he wanted to portray their humanity.

Upon hearing that he may be in the running for an Oscar, Giroux stated: "When we started working on Félix et Meira in 2011, we never imagined that the movie would be so successful once it was finished. The process to secure funding for the project was particularly difficult, but we never questioned the potential of this unique film."

He added that Telefilm Canada, a leading funder, believed in the project from the start.

Giroux's third movie has received close to 20 festival prizes including the Tobias Szpancer Award for best film in the Between Judaism and Israelism Competition at the Haifa International Film Festival in Israel.

In 2014, a record 83 countries made entries in the foreign language film category. Eight Canadian films have been nominated in that category over the history of the Oscars.

The Canadian Oscar selection committee comprises 23 representatives from the country's film industry and major government cultural agencies.

A Canadian-Palestinian film produced by another Montrealer, Ina Fichman, has been submitted by the Palestinian Ministry of Culture for Oscar consideration in the foreign language category.

The Wanted 18, co-directed by Canadian Paul Cowan and Palestinian Amer Shomali, is an animated documentary feature set at the beginning of the first intifadah. It tells the story of how residents of the West Bank town of Beit Sahour tried to start their own dairy industry in order to end their dependence on milk from Israel.

The title refers to the 18 cows the Palestinians tried to hide from the Israeli army, which deemed their activities a security threat.

Fichman, a veteran documentary filmmaker and head of Intuitive Pictures, co-produced *The Wanted 18* with Nathalie Cloutier of the National Film Board of Canada. It was already won a number of awards. ■

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Book shows a lesser-known side of this rosh yeshiva

MARTIN LOCKSHIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

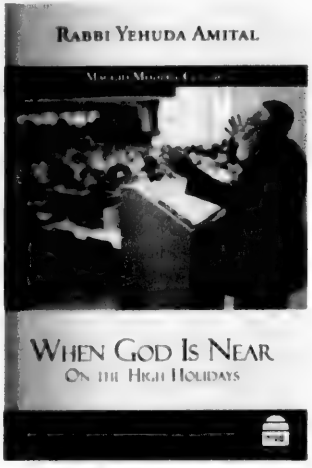
Rabbi Yehuda Amital (1924-2010) was a compassionate, charismatic and occasionally controversial leader of the National Religious (or modern Orthodox) Jewish community in Israel.

A Holocaust survivor, he was liberated at the end of 1944. He moved to Israel right away and served in the Israeli army in the War of Independence. He pursued a career in Jewish education, and in 1968, became a founder and rosh yeshiva (head of school) of Yeshivat Har Etzion, one of the first institutions set up in the territories that Israel won in the Six Day War.

Partly because of the yeshiva's location and partly because of the teachers and students it attracted, the yeshiva and Rabbi Amital were originally considered to be on the right wing of the Israeli political spectrum. However, in 1988, Rabbi Amital founded the Israeli movement Meimad, a short-lived political party of religious Jews who wanted Israel to take more courageous steps toward making peace with Palestinians, including territorial compromise.

Many Jews knew Rabbi Amital best for his political involvement. But he saw his life work as being a rosh yeshiva. In an attempt to make this side of his life understandable to English readers, Maggid Books has published a collection of talks that he delivered to his students over the years during the High Holiday season. The talks were adapted and edited by his son, Rabbi Yoel Amital. A thoughtful afterword by his son-in-law, Rabbi Yehudah Gilad, discusses the philosophical and educational themes in the talks.

Taking the words of an Israeli rosh yeshiva speaking to his students and bringing them to life for non-yeshiva English speakers is not an easy task. The translator must have command of biblical, rabbinic and modern Hebrew, as well as Aramaic. Familiarity with the sources themselves is a must, since much of the discussion involves texts building upon each other.



When God is Near: On the High Holidays
by Rabbi Yehuda Amital, translated by Karen Fish and others

Maggid Books, a division of Koren Publishers

Seven translators took part, although most of the work was done by Karen Fish. The result is almost always readable and accurate. Occasional lapses occur. For example, when Maimonides explains how God measures people's righteousness, the Hebrew text reads: "The reckoning is not based on the number of merits and sins but on their magnitude." (Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance, 3:2).

Here, Maimonides' statement becomes: "The reckoning is not based *only* on the number of merits and sins but *also* on their magnitude." Maimonides' text does not require improvement or toning down.

Still, the book does successfully convey the values of this special rabbi. Readers see that he, unlike many other heads of yeshivot, did not teach his students to withdraw from the culture around them and concentrate only on Torah. He did not encourage or even allow his students to think that since they were involved in serious study of holy texts, they were superior to the rest of Israeli society.

A large portion of the book consists of Rabbi Amital's explanations of the biblical story (Genesis, 22) of the binding of Isaac, when God tells Abraham to take his son Isaac to a distant mountain and sacrifice him there. Abraham complies, but at the very last moment, the tragedy is averted when an angel tells Abraham to stop. This story is a central part of the Rosh Hashanah service, and we will also be reading it again in synagogues in a few weeks.

The Bible tells us nothing about Abraham's state of mind during the three days that he and Isaac were travelling to the site of sacrifice. Some religious thinkers have portrayed Abraham as a "knight of faith," a term coined by the Christian thinker Soren Kierkegaard. Many think of Abraham as a silent paragon of faith and submission who follows God's instructions dutifully even when he does not understand them.

Rabbi Amital rejected this interpretation. He repeatedly taught his yeshiva students that rabbinic Judaism understood the story of Abraham and Isaac differently, quoting the line from the Mishnah (Taanit, 2:4) that says that in Temple times, people offered the following prayer on fast days: "He who answered Abraham at Mount Moriah – may He answer you and listen to your cry on this day." (A version of this line has survived as part of the *Slichot* service in use today, too.)

Rabbi Amital pointed out that this meant the ancient rabbis understood that Abraham did not accept God's command silently. Rather, he beseeched God to spare Isaac. This point is also made in other old rabbinic texts. Rabbi Amital often quoted this one as well: "His [Abraham's] eyes opened with a great weeping, and he sighed a great sigh… and said, 'I lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come?'" (Yalkut Shimoni, 1:101, quoting Psalms, 121:1).

"We are familiar," Rabbi Amital taught, "with the phenomenon of the suppression of any human or parental feeling while in the throes of religious ecstasy. In biblical times, this found expression in the worship of Moloch, and in our times, we see the attitude in the response of our neighbours to the death of a '*shahid*' [martyr]." According to Rabbi Amital, Abraham passed God's test by *not* giving up on his human parental feelings. Jewish tradition, he taught, "seeks to emphasize the humanity of Abraham."

Human feelings and emotions, Rabbi Amital taught, are not at odds with religious behaviour, but are an integral part of the practice of Judaism. ■

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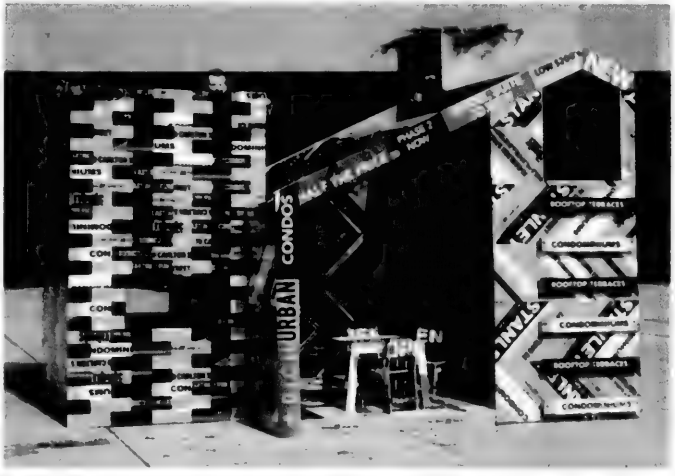
Reimagining what a sukkah should look like

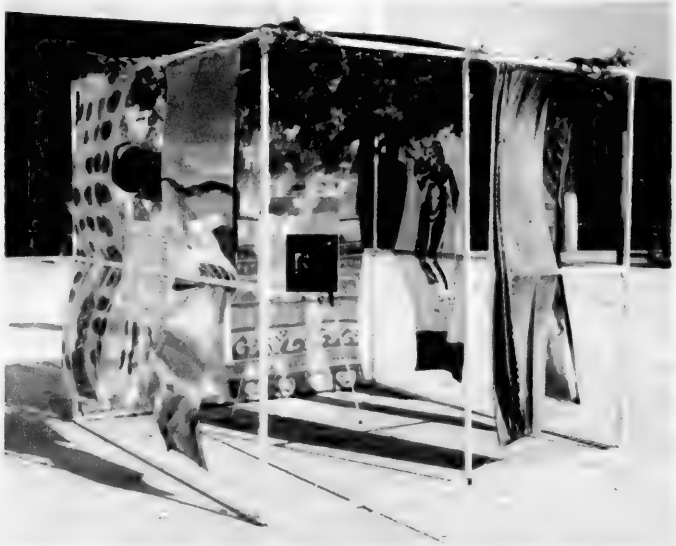
The 2015 Sukkahville International Design Exhibition took place Sept. 25 to 27 at Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto. Presented by Kehilla Residential Programme, the annual event invites contributors to produce innovative sukkah designs, and spurs an important conversation about the need for affordable housing. Here are some of the notable entries from this year's Sukkahville. ■

There were more than 80 submissions for Sukkahville. Finalists constructed and displayed their designs during Sukkot. VICTOR HELFAND PHOTO

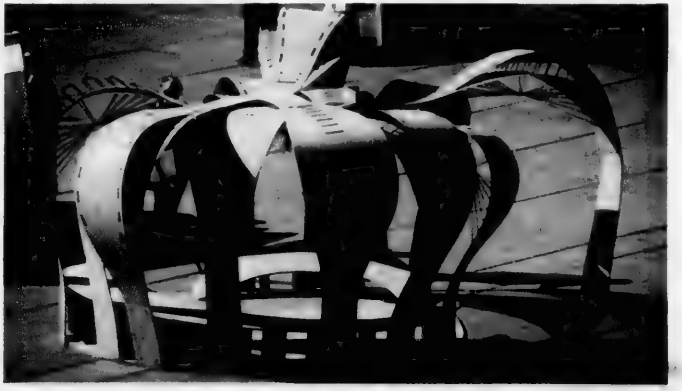


The Koffler Centre commissioned Dan Bergeron's sukkah for kids. VICTOR HELFAND PHOTO

People's Choice winner *Shelter of Four*, by Kaya Kim and Deena Jamokha. ARTHUR FISH PHOTO



The New Israel Fund's *Sukkah by the Water* was designed in the 1980s. DEREK POKORA PHOTO



Lulav Forest, by Adryanne Quenneville and Tasneem Rahman, took first prize. ARTHUR FISH PHOTO

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Noah Goldstein and House chairman Lorne Goldstein

#Gamechangers

Isadore and Rosalie Sharp hosted a group of forward-thinking young adults committed to making a difference in the community. Isadore Sharp, founder and CEO of the Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, presented opening remarks before a lecture by Rabbi Rafi Lipner at the inaugural meeting of #Gamechangers, a new program launched by The House. The audience was eager to hear what it takes to become a community leader. ■ - *The Socialite*

Shira Lipner, with House board member Cheryl Newburgh

Seth and Daniella Greenspan, Hadassa Rubinstein Pertman and Jeremy Pertman

Sara Rodier, Samantha Cook, Orit Buchman, Kortney Shapiro and Samantha Banks

Micah Vernon, Laura Shiner, Aaron Crespin and Corbin Seligman

Orli Kessel, Marli Gurvey, Ashley Kochman, Kyle Lichtman and Shauna Bornstein

JAMIE S. HOROWITZ PHOTOS

The Socialite wants your photos. Email thesocialite@thecjn.ca for submission details.

What's New

OCT. 8 - OCT. 15

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Oct. 8

POWERFUL PHOTOGRAPHY
Adath Israel Congregation presents a panel discussing "The enduring power of photography and the presentation of difficult topics," based on the AGO exhibit of photos of life in the Lodz Ghetto, 7:30 p.m. $15/$20. To register, visit www.adathisrael.com.

THE OTHER PEACE PROCESS
Rabbi Ron Kronish, Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel, and **Sheikh Ghasan Manasra**, Islamic Cultural Centre in Nazareth, discuss "Is Arab-Jewish coexistence in Israel still possible?" Beth Tzedec Congregation, 7:30 p.m. Free.

WORDS FROM THE STREET
Ve'ahavta and the Toronto Writers Collective showcase the writing of marginalized people, University of Toronto, Galbraith building, Room 244, 35 St. George St., 7-9 p.m.

THE STORY OF THE BEATLES
Mike Daley discusses the story and music of the Beatles, Temple Har Zion, 8 p.m., $5/$8.

Friday, Oct. 9

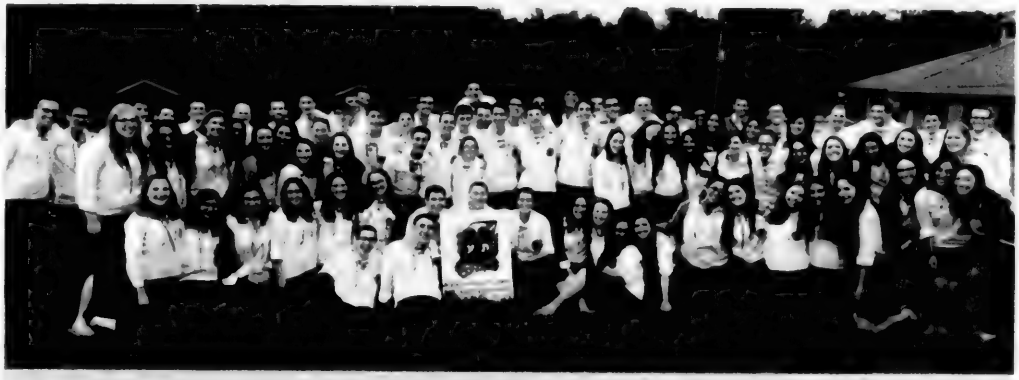
CREATIVE WRITING
Sylvia Warsh teaches creative writing for 10 weeks, starting today, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Bernard Betel Centre.

Sunday, Oct. 11

BOOK LAUNCH
Book launch for the *Toronto Jewish Disability Resource Guide*, 4-6:30 p.m., the DANI Centre, 501 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill. Featuring music, crafts and games.

BRUNCH AND LEARN
Enjoy brunch with the Harold Green Jewish Theatre, 10 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Oct. 22 is Oct. 12. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**



Bnei Akiva's leaders

Bnei Akiva of Toronto held its annual leadership training seminar last month. Ninety leaders from across Toronto participated in the Shabbaton, which took place at Bnei Akiva's campsite in Ennismore, Ont.

Tuesday, Oct. 13

LUNCHING AND LEARNING
Jason Applebaum and **Rabbi Jarod Grover** discuss "From the view of a recovered problem gambler," at Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

Doris Bergen discusses "Ten things you didn't know about the Holocaust," noon, Beth Sholom Synagogue, $18. RSVP 416-783-6103.

CHUG HA-TANACH
Aaron Nussbaum discusses "Introduction and Chapter 1 of the Book of Isaiah," 8 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

FRUMBA
Beth Emeth Synagogue offers a 9-week session of Frumba, 7:30 p.m.

BIBLE CLASSES
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner teaches a course on the Book of Job, Oct. 13-June 21, 1:30 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation; **Shoshana Zolty** teaches a class on exegesis by studying the story of Avraham and Sarah, Oct. 13 -May 24, 7:30 p.m., Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, or Oct. 14-May 25, 9:30 a.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. www.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050.

Wednesday, Oct. 14

JUDAISM ON THE CAMPUS
Vera Held discusses "Preparing our children to deal with their Judaism on the campus," 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

HONEST REPORTING
Gary Kenzer, North American executive director of Honest Reporting, speaks at Adath Israel Congregation, 7:30 p.m. $15/$20. 416-635-5340, ext. 308.

BIBLICAL DAY TRIPS
Hana Werner discusses "Rebecca: a psychological portrait of Isaac's wife," dessert at 1:30, lecture at 2 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. $60 for 10 sessions/$10 at the door. RSVP 416-781-3511.

LUNCH AND LEARN
Dr. Jeffrey Lipsitz discusses "How to get a good sleep," Temple Sinai at noon. $10/$12. RSVP 416-487-4161.

MORASHA CLASSES
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner teaches a course on "How to be an ethical customer," today to Nov. 11, 10 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. Other courses taught by **Seymour Epstein** and **Rabbi Roy Tanenbaum**. 416-789-7400.

Thursday, Oct. 15

CHAI MITZVAH
Rabbi Micah Streiffer (Temple Kol Ami) and **Rabbi Noam Katz** (Leo Baeck Day School) teach a monthly class at 8:30 a.m. Call 905-709-2620.

SPOUSAL BEREAVEMENT GROUPS
Adath Israel Congregation offers bereavement support groups for widows, Oct. 15-Nov. 19, 1-3 p.m.; for men and women Oct. 20-Nov. 24, 7:30 p.m. Free for members, $180 for non-members. **Nilly**, 416-635-5340.

Coming Events

HEBREW/TALMUD CLASSES
Rabbi Noah Sonenberg teaches a Talmud class for women, Sundays starting Oct. 18, 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. www.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050.

Temple Har Zion offers beginner and advanced beginner Hebrew classes, Thursday nights.

Pride of Israel Synagogue offers conversational ulpan Hebrew with **Yael Lev** for beginners (must read Hebrew), intermediate, and advanced levels. Daytime or evening classes. Free learn to read Hebrew. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers needed to sell poppies Oct. 30-Nov. 11 in the Bathurst Street and St. Clair Avenue area for the Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch. Email sgs823@sympatico.ca

Volunteers needed once a month to drive vision impaired seniors to social events. Call **Sheila**, 905-731-9667.

LEGAL SUPPORT FOR WOMEN

Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org.

BE THE MATCH

Adath Israel Congregation holds a stem cell and bone marrow clinic, Oct. 25, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS

Chai Branch of National Council of Jewish Women invites women over 50 to join. 416-633-5100.

The Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch, Ladies Auxiliary, is looking for women who have had a spouse, parents or grandparents in the armed forces to join. Call **Eva Kay**, 905-886-5119.

SPOUSAL BEREAVEMENT GROUP

Baycrest Terraces/Wagman Centre offers a spousal bereavement group for men and women over 55 starting in October. **Shawn Fremeth**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2986.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- **Effective parenting**: A 4-session group to help parents with children aged 2-10. Starts Oct. 19, 7-9 p.m., Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St.
- **Beyond the chupah:** A two-session marriage preparation class for couples who will be married in the next year. Oct. 18, 25, 11 a.m., Temple Sinai.
- **Mind body connection for women:** An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Oct. 26 at 1 p.m. or Oct. 29 at 7 p.m. at Lipa Green Centre; or Oct. 28, at 7 p.m. at Lebovic Campus or 35 Madison Ave.
- **Parenting the child/teen with ADHD:** A 4-week group for parents of children diagnosed with ADHD. Oct. 29, 7 p.m.
- **Separation 101:** A 1-session workshop for adults in the process of separating from their spouse. Oct. 29, 7 p.m.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS

Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Swing dance classes with **Kris Light**, Oct. 13-Dec. 1. Dance lesson at 11 a.m., social dance at noon. No experience or partner needed; **Eve Goldberg** sings the music of Simon and Garfunkel, Oct. 8, 1:30 p.m. **Beverly Fingerhut** discusses "The great synagogues of Paris, Florence and Rome," Oct. 15 and 22, 1:30 p.m. Register 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or email lisar@mnjcc.org.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and Ping-Pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9; Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.; exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526, or colinb@mnjcc.org.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Oct. 13, **Shlomo Schwartzberg** discusses "The past and future of film criticism," 10 a.m.; Oct. 15, **Allan Madonik** discusses "Golden years solution," 1:30 p.m.; **David Lipovitch** teaches a course on "Ancient Israel archeology," Oct. 15-Dec. 10, 1-3 p.m.; **Kevin Courrier** teaches a course on "How Jewish life has permeated movies," Oct. 19- Dec. 7, 3-5 p.m.; book club meets Tuesdays at 1 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Bridge, partners required, Tuesdays, noon; Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; Bring your creative crafts, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.; Casino Woodbine Oct. 14; live entertainment Nov. 18 at 2 p.m..

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- JCC players, after-school musical theatre program starts Oct. 7, 6:30 p.m.
- Music for babies and toddlers starts Oct. 15, 10 a.m.
- Sports with Jay, parent and tots, starts Oct. 18, 10 a.m.
- Screening of the film, *Sturgeon Queens*, Oct. 20 at noon.
- Beginner mah-jong starts Oct. 7, 10:30 a.m.
- "A Taste of Jazz," presented by the Royal Conservatory of Music, Tuesdays, Nov. 3-17, 1- 3 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Celebrating women artists," starting Oct. 13, 1 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- *Defending the Caveman*, a comedy about men and women, Oct. 9, 10, at 8 p.m. www.thecaveman.ca
- *Passages*, mixed media by **Alice Vander Vennen** is in the gallery until Oct. 28.
- The gallery is looking for an Israeli visual artist for March 2016. Submissions close Nov. 1. Contact deannad@mnjcc.org
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities. Companions and support people welcome. Ongoing to Dec. 6, 1 p.m. Call ext. 330.
- Shabbat family party, spaces still available, Fridays, 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Ext. 388.
- Fall supper club for young adults with developmental disabilities, Oct. 14-Nov. 18, 4-8:30 p.m. Ext. 330
- Fitness: MELT full body method, Oct. 21-Nov. 18, 11 a.m.; Inclusive run club, starts Oct. 22 at 6 p.m. or Nov. 7 at noon; High Intensity Interval Training, starts Oct. 19 and Oct. 20. Ext. 574.
- Support group for adult children of Holocaust survivors, starts Oct. 29. RSVP **Shoshana Yakobi**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2271.
- Wheel dance: learn Latin dance in a mixed abilities class. Oct. 18-Dec. 6, 6 p.m. liviyam@mnjcc.org or ext. 330.
- From tummies to mummies: Pre- and post-natal bootcamp, aquafit and yoga classes. Call ext. 567.
- Some spaces still available for Hebrew and Yiddish classes starting Oct. 13. Ext. 388.
- Social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Call ext. 330.
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the art of Degas, Oct. 19, 26, 1:30 p.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

- When spirituality meets science: Neuroscience reveals the power of meditation, Oct. 14, 7 p.m.
- Royal Conservatory of Music presents "The enigma of Russian music," Oct. 20, 7 p.m.
- Bridge level 1, Oct. 7-Nov. 25, 7 p.m. ■

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MARRIED WITH KIDS

Keen for a seat in others' sukkahs

Lauren Kramer

I had no desire to build a sukkah until I became a mother, at which point the desire was born with a vengeance. All of a sudden, a sukkah on Sukkot was not just necessary – it was essential.

Memories of the sukkot my father had erected in my childhood years returned with full force, and I was determined that the mitzvah of building and dining in the sukkah would become part of our family tradition.

Little did I know, it was easier said than done.

Dutifully, my husband went off to the hardware store, returning with various metal poles and sackcloth to form the walls. Four hours later, our sukkah was looking half decent, but a few days later, after wind and rain, it was a dishevelled mess on the ground that took several more hours to clean up.

The poles were sequestered in a dusty corner of the garage and the wind-torn cloth was saved for another year with better weather. We were disillusioned with the prospect of building a sukkah, and even the kids' excitement as Sukkot drew close, couldn't bring us to try and build one again for another couple of years.

A few years later, I decided there had to be a better way, and a mail order sukkah seemed just the right mixture of ease and convenience. I began a search online and learned that money could buy a sukkah that went up in minutes rather than hours. We purchased one with white tarps, bungee cords, metal connectors and metal poles for around $350, adding bamboo schach from the local hardware store. The day we proudly erected our new sukkah, the sun was beaming down, and the prospect of moonlit meals under the schach seemed appealing and infinitely possible.

Then the rain arrived. Overnight the wind tore holes in the tarp, destroyed the paper decorations our kids had crafted and vetoed any possibility of an outdoor meal. Over the next few years, the sukkah

> *It always seemed too chilly, too rainy or too windy to make an October meal out there feasible*

was erected and dismantled dutifully in the days before and after Sukkot, but the weather pattern repeated itself time and again. Eventually my husband threw up his hands in despair. "Seriously? We're going to build it again?" he asked.

Since we'd never actually spent any time in the sukkah – it always seemed too chilly, too rainy or too windy to make an October meal out there feasible – I couldn't come up with a positive answer. The sukkah sat in the garage for a few more years before a comprehensive clean-up became inevitable. That's when I realized there was no point in continuing to store those poles, tarps and bungee cords. I found a local community member who fostered the same early sukkah zeal I'd had a few years earlier and was willing to take them off my hands. I gladly donated every one of them.

Now that my sukkah is gone, I have sukkah envy on the occasions we're invited out. Some years, the weather is plain nasty and we huddle under blankets and warm jackets in other people's sukkah, wondering why we're subjecting ourselves to an outdoor meal.

But every now and then there's a beautiful, still, starlit evening and beneath the schach, feasting on someone else's brisket and roast chicken, you can feel the magic in the air. That's when I find myself wishing our sukkah had had a different future.

These days, our kids have grown, and the idea of creating our own sukkah is no longer one greeted with enthusiasm. It's getting harder to find folks in my neighbourhood who still erect a sukkah, but nonetheless, every time this holiday rolls around, I furtively hope we'll get invited out by someone who continues the tradition.

There's a saying: "The best boat is your friend's boat." Selfishly, I'm thinking the same might be true of a sukkah. ■

Mazel Tov!

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Happy second birthday to our little cutie Jonah Benjamin Salsberg. We all love you so much! You bring so much light to all our lives.

Mazel tov Lillian & Sam Silverstone celebrating your 65th wedding anniversary. With love from your children, grandchildren and two soon-to-be great-grandchildren.

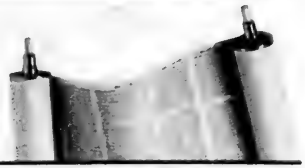
Mazel tov to Nathan & Ettie Sugar on their 60th anniversary, Oct. 30. All our love from your children, grandchildren. Enjoy many more healthy years.

A happy 99th birthday to our beautiful mother, Helen Rosensweig. Love from your daughters Gloria Golberg Fenster and Barbara Stengel, your grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **eblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Parshah

Bereshit | Genesis 1:1-6:8



Maharat Abby Brown Scheier searches for the positive lessons to be found in the story of Eve
Rabbi Denise Handlarski considers how creation and destruction can coexist in our world
Rabbi Yirmi Cohen explores Hakhel, the gathering of the nation at the end of shmittah

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier

Along with other struggles and challenges of the human experience, the pangs of childbirth are a result of Eve's punishment following the temptation in the Garden of Eden.

The *Tzena Ur'ena*, a 17th-century Yiddish prayer book for women with translations and explanations of the biblical readings for Shabbat and holidays, suggests a fascinating custom that arose among pregnant Ashkenazi women. The custom is based on the midrash that suggests the fruit that so tempted Eve was the etrog. *Tzena Ur'ena* suggests that after Sukkot, a pregnant woman should bite off the tip of the etrog.

According to the prayer to be recited at that time, this act was a corrective to Eve's impetuous act. Unlike Eve's impatience in eating the fruit, women now wait until the conclusion of Sukkot to indulge this temptation. Additionally, the prayer sought to invalidate the curse of Eve, and specifically birth pangs.

However, as the mother of four daughters, I can't help but look for the positive lessons that Eve teaches us.

Some interpreters explain that the formation of Eve from Adam reflects her inferiority. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (19th-century Germany), in his comment on Genesis, 2:22, explains that the formation of woman from the side of man creates two equal creatures. He says man was created out of earth – out of the raw material – and woman was created from man, which was something already formed.

Eve represents our feelings as we bring children into the world. A child is not born out of raw material, with no prior experiences to guide her or him. A child is born to learn from the experiences that preceded the birth.

Our hopes for our children are that they will learn from the past and not make the mistakes that we made; our dreams are that they will take the blessings they have been born with and become better versions of ourselves. ■

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier is a Judaic Studies teacher in Montreal, where she lives with her husband and four daughters.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

Bereshit, beginning with "in the beginning," signals to us the possibilities for reading each parshah anew each year. This year, I'm struck in particular by the parallel possibilities in the text.

For example, we have two competing stories for the creation of woman. In Chapter 1, the text says: "And God created man in is image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." In Chapter 2, the creation of Adam and Eve, we find that Adam, lacking a "fitting helper," was made to sleep so that God could "fashion" Eve into a woman from Adam's rib.

In the first chapter, man and woman are created at the same time and as equals. By contrast, Eve is created to be Adam's helper, and given that she comes out of his body, the text implies that she is to be subservient to him. We have embedded in this parshah, the possibility for equality between the sexes and then, immediately, its reversal.

And there are other examples. Bereshit begins by describing the creation of the world, and then the Adam and Eve story ends with their expulsion from paradise. In each case, there is the possibility for beauty and goodness and then its immediate undoing.

As the parshah continues, we get the story of Cain and Abel, the first pair of brothers to know jealousy and to fight.

So, the Torah begins with stories of both creation and destruction. But why? What can we learn? The world we've been given is beautiful, yet through our choices, we make it ugly. Or, that creation and destruction, good and evil, beauty and ugliness, must all coexist in our world. Or, that we should pause and wonder at the marvel of our own existence and, simultaneously, be careful not to squander the wonderful gift that is life. Bereshit contains these contradictions that make up the texture of our lives and, fittingly for the first parshah, the very complexities we find in the rest of the Torah. ■

Rabbi Denise Handlarski is assistant rabbi with Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen

As I write this column, we are deep into the federal election campaign in Canada (and in the United States). Crowds are flocking to hear their favourite candidate. There is nothing like being part of something live.

At these rallies, journalists ask parents with children, "Why did you bring your child?" They answer that they want their child to be a part of history.

As we enter this historical year of "Hakhel," the gathering of the nation at the end of shmittah, the sabbatical year, we relive that awesome moment when millions of Jews, men, women and children, scholars and laypeople, infants and great-grandparents, assembled in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount.

There was a hush as the king would begin to read sections of the holy Torah. It was an inspiring moment of unity.

This event, called Hakhel, to gather, was unlike other time-bound mitzvot – it was the only event that required every Jew to attend.

Why should children be at such a gathering? We're told that this experience of awe is so deep, that it touches everyone, and in the Hakhel gathering, everyone can sense their purpose.

The biblical mitzvah of Hakhel is only for a time when all the Jews live in Israel.

However, as with other campaigns, the Lubavitcher Rebbe took this mitzvah from the "shelf" and made it relevant for today.

The Rebbe encouraged all Jews, in the year of Hakhel, to use this auspicious time to assemble everyone, to gather and increase in mitzvot and Torah study.

So in this Hakhel year, exercise your civic duty and vote, to be a part of Hakhel and change the world. Bring your children to pray with a fellow Jew. Show your love and solidarity with your people, do a mitzvah.

May we merit to the ultimate Hakhel gathering in Jerusalem, with Mashiach, and in our days! ■

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen is at Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation in Toronto.
Email: yirmicohen@sympatico.ca

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My challah baking lesson

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

This past July, I spent a wonderful afternoon with several of my friends at a challah baking class. Challah is Jewish soul food. Baking challah is a mitzvah, a real connection to yourself, your community, your family and the Jewish People.

Gail Michalowicz was invited to teach us to how to make a delicious challah recipe. We also had the privilege of learning from her many of the traditions and meanings for making challah, as well as all the steps and prayers involved along the way. Michalowicz is very involved in the community-wide "Generation to Generation" challah bake of 2,000 women and girls planned for Oct. 23 and 24. She urges that Jewish women in our community should consider being a part of it. For more information, check out: www.ShabbatProjectToronto.com

At the beginning of our lesson, we were each supplied with a disposable apron, a bowl and a spatula. All the ingredients were laid out on the table and we went to work. Michalowicz explained to us that as we put the challah ingredients together in the bowl, it is an opportune time for prayer and reflection. With the addition of each ingredient, we think of the deeper significance and meaning behind its physical reality. We learned that:

The Bowl: Represents the home, and each additional ingredient should bring its unique blessing.

Flour: Represents the raw material we desperately need for substance.

Sugar: As we pour in the sugar we hope and pray for a life that is a "Ma Tov U'Ma Nayim" or has sweetness and good things.

Salt: We hide the salt in the flour to remind ourselves not to be overly critical, and also to accept the sting of criticism from others.

Yeast: Represents the understanding to keep growing and expanding.

Water: Represents a life of clarity and wisdom. For the Torah, our instruction book to living, is called "Mayim Chayim" or the water of life.

Oil: Represents abundance and blessing. Jewish kings were anointed with oil for blessing and understanding. As we pour the oil into the bowl, we think of anointing each member of our family with blessing and understanding. Surprisingly, we learned that we start with ourselves, as we are the heart of the home.

Eggs: Represent fertility and the cycle of life because of their shape. We pray for the strength to travel the cycles of life and for fertility.

Last, we take all of these varied ingredients and knead them together into an exquisite challah dough. This symbolizes that we need to take all the different people and relationships in our lives and knead them into a beautiful unit and community.

We learned that when making dough with more than 12-1/2 cups of flour, an olive size portion of dough is removed that is actually called "challah," and a special brachah or prayer is said. This is done to remember the mitzvah of challah as prescribed in the Torah. This piece of challah was given to the kohen, thereby showing appreciation and reinforcing trust in HaShem.

Michalowicz also showed us how to make a braided bun, a loaf challah and a braided challah. We were sent home with our challah dough to let it rise for the last time and bake it in our own homes as is the tradition. I made my dough into cute little buns and the aroma wafting from the oven made my house smell wonderful. ■

Challah recipe

- ❑ 1 tbsp. salt
- ❑ 7 cups flour, starting with 6 1/2
- ❑ 3/4 cup sugar
- ❑ 1 1/2 tbsp. instant dry yeast
- ❑ 2 cups warm water
- ❑ 2 eggs
- ❑ 1/2 cup oil (plus a bit extra for oiling the dough)

In a large bowl combine all the dry ingredients: flour, yeast, salt and sugar. Add the warm water, oil and eggs and mix to make a soft dough. Knead the dough for 10 to 15 minutes. Oil the dough and cover the bowl. Let dough rise until doubled, approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. Punch down and shape. Let rise an additional 45 minutes.

Heat oven to 350. On a floured board, shape or braid challah, as desired, and place on cookie sheet covered with parchment paper. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes depending on the size, until golden brown. Challah is baked when it sounds hollow when tapped.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 8, 2015

Chloé Valdary: Zionists must create their own narrative

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Chloé Valdary, 22, a recent University of New Orleans graduate, is the founder of a campus group called Allies of Israel, which promotes Israel advocacy.

Valdary has written articles for the *Huffington Post*, *Tablet* magazine, and the *Jerusalem Post*, served as a consultant for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), and worked as the assistant of directors for the Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel (ISBI).

Late last month, she was invited to a student leadership conference organized by Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies to speak about strategies to combat the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement on campuses.

Valdary, who is a Tikvah Fund fellow and the founder of a non-profit organization called Declare Your Freedom, which celebrates Zionism, spoke to *The CJN* about her mission to combat anti-Israel rhetoric.

Under what circumstances did you become an outspoken Israel advocate?

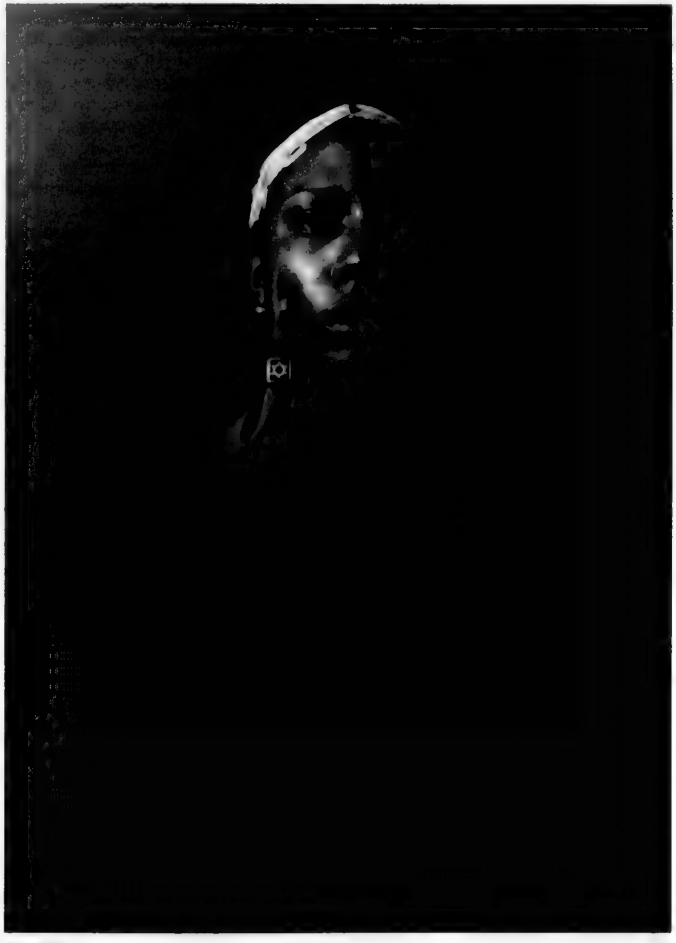
I started pro-Israel advocacy in college in great depth, but I was involved in studying Jewish culture in high school. I read a lot of Jewish literature, specifically books by Leon Uris, and when I got into college, books by Elie Wiesel as well. I also have an interesting cultural background. My family, which is Christian, observes all the Jewish holidays, and Shabbat and kosher style when I was growing up.

I became an advocate in college when I realized that anti-Semitism was rising globally.

What message did you bring to the FSWC conference?

I talked about my personal story, my philosophy when it comes to Zionism, specifically, what it is about and what it is not about. Namely, Zionism is not about the Arab-Israeli conflict, and neither is the story of Israel. The Arab-Israeli conflict is a part of the story, but it is not the fundamental story of Israel. Until we begin to understand the complexities and depths of what Zionism is about – and in my estimation, it is about, in part, a love story between a people and its land, the celebration of an indigenous people returning to their land, and Zionism is a political manifestation of the radical notion that Jews should be free – that's what it is on a basic level.

For me personally, I don't really feel compelled to explain everything that the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) does in a particular region. Once you understand that Zionism is not about the Arab-Israeli conflict, the actions of the IDF, whether they be good or bad, whether they be right or full of mistakes, which they are sometimes, does not threaten the legitimacy or Zionism, so therefore it is irrelevant to the conversation that we should be having on college campuses.



Chloé Valdary

What is the biggest challenge for pro-Israel students who are faced with aggressive anti-Israel activists?

I think one of the biggest challenges is transcending the usual cycle we see within the pro-Israel world, which is that anti-Israel people define their narrative, and we base our advocacy on trying to correct it and on trying to answer their narrative, as opposed to creating an entire curriculum based on our own narrative.

I think this is one of the biggest challenges, not only for students who are outspoken and face aggressive anti-Semitic organizations on campus, but just in general. I think this is the biggest challenge for the pro-Israel community.

Until we transition from that to create our own narrative, we'll be stuck, and we won't make progress, in terms of winning the conversation on college campuses.

Does it make sense to ignore, rather than engage, the small minority of students who are making noise?

There are a number of campuses where no one cares what SJP (Students for Justice in Palestine) is saying, and they are coming across as radical and too confrontational for mainstream students to actually care. But I would say that regardless of whether or not that was true, the pro-Israel world should be promoting their narrative anyway.

In my sophomore year and junior year, there was no SJP, but we were constantly promoting a certain narrative about Israel and Zionism on college campuses.

We understood that the validity and legitimacy of our narrative is not contingent upon the presence or the appearance of naysayers or dissenters. It is supposed to be sustained by itself.

Having been the subject of personal, and sometimes racist, attacks based on your views, do you feel that people feel more threatened by pro-Israel advocates who aren't Jewish?

Yes, because we pose a certain threat, so to speak, to anti-Israel people because people claim that Zionism is exclusive or discriminatory or exclusionary, and so it fights against that if you have someone who is non-Jewish fighting against anti-Israel rhetoric.

What happens with me, when I talk to people who are anti-Israel about my love for Zionism, they start to say things that don't make sense because they actually can't wrap their heads around that concept. I have gotten threats, and stuff like that, so I think there is a more visceral hatred, in some cases as least, for people who are non-Jews who are Zionist and promote that, because it carries a lot of weight and it poses a huge threat to the anti-Israel movement.

Can you tell me about the piece you wrote that was critical of anti-Israel groups equating the black civil rights movements with the anti-Israel movement?

I wrote that piece for *Tablet* magazine last year, called *To the Students for Justice in Palestine, a letter from an angry Black woman*, and it addressed the fact that the language they were using was definitely and deliberately emblematic of causes of the civil rights movement. Historically, not only were many luminaries in the civil rights movement pro-Israel, but they were self-professed Zionists who came out against the Arab boycott.

It was ignorant and disrespectful to that history of the actual record of people involved in the civil rights movement and also it was like pilfering another people's legacy for their own cause, which I thought was unacceptable. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

The gift of a good question

Backstory

PAUL SOCKEN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The problem of suffering in the world is perhaps the greatest challenge that religion must face. How can religion explain or rationalize suffering – often ostensibly of the innocent?

Judaism has been wrestling with this question since biblical times, but it is a question without a solution, as any authentic answer would mean knowing the mind of God, an impossibility for the finite, human mind.

Yet, question we must, for humans are by nature inquiring and endowed with a searching awareness. Jews in particular are a curious lot, obsessed with questions, regardless of whether or not there is an answer. In fact, given the Jewish genius for questions, it would appear that the questions matter far more than the answer.

In the Bible, God instructs Abraham to "Go from your land, your birthplace, and your father's home" to the land that He will show him. A midrash compares Abraham's wanderings to a man who sees a palace in flames: "Is there no owner?" the man asks. The owner of the palace replies, "I am the owner." The midrash compares this story to Abraham, who asked "Is it possible that the world lacks a ruler" to which God replied, "I am the ruler, the Sovereign of the Universe."

What does Abraham's leaving the familiarity of his home for an undesignated place that God will show him have to do with a palace in flames? Maybe the midrashic story is conveying the idea that once Abraham, the first monotheist, who accepted the idea of one God in a world of pagans, left the reassuring cocoon of home and hearth, he was confronted by a world that challenged his belief to the core of his being.

The world is like a burning palace – a stunningly beautiful natural and man-made creation that is constantly in danger of destruction. Whether by natural or human forces, the world seems barely to survive every onslaught. Abraham, like those of us who follow in his footsteps, will wonder if there is any rhyme or reason to it all – if there is an "owner," someone responsible, in charge.

It is important to note that in this story the palace is in flames, and yet the midrash does not indicate that it is burnt down or lost, nor is God's reassurance accompanied by any explanation or reason for the palace being so seriously threatened in the first place.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks explains that the story rejects the notion that the flames – our woes and suffering – indicate that there is no God and no purpose. However, the idea that there is a Sovereign does not preclude there being flames. God exists, but so does suffering. The one does not negate the other.

Abraham must accept this conundrum if he is to understand the world and represent the painful truth that humanity will always be in danger of disorder and chaos. As Rabbi Sacks states, Judaism is not a celebration of the world as it is, but a protest that the world is not as it ought to be.

The question really is more important than the answer. As long as people question why things are as they are, protest injustice and heal the suffering, attempt on any level to engage the world to make it a better place, we will be doing what we are intended to do.

Perhaps the major Jewish contribution to civilization, after monotheism itself, is the idea that we have the obligation to question everything, as long as the questions are good and lead to something positive and constructive. The palace will always be in flames and we will never fully comprehend why.

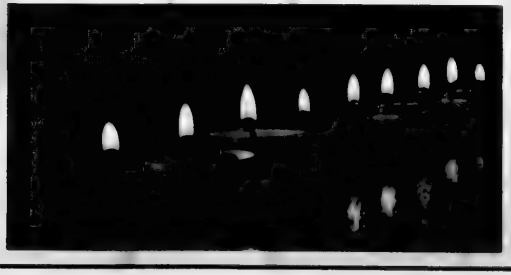
That fact does not mean that there is no God. It does mean that we have the responsibility to recognize our role in preserving the palace and acting decisively and effectively. If that lesson alone were what Judaism has given to the world, it would be a most magnificent and luminous gift. ■

Dr. Paul Socken is distinguished professor emeritus in the University of Waterloo.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Barker, Alan	September 23, 2015	217 Brighton Ave
Rothman, Eugene	September 26, 2015	90 Edgewater Dr
Fishauf, Brenda	September 27, 2015	645 Castlefield Ave
Shtock, Malka	September 27, 2015	4455 Bathurst St
Petes, Mary	September 28, 2015	868 Sheppard Ave W



SHIRLEY MARION SIDLOFSKY (COHEN)

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late SHIRLEY MARION SIDLOFSKY (Cohen) will take place Sunday, October 11, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. Woodlawn Memorial Park, 762 Woolwich St., Guelph, Beth Isaiah Section.

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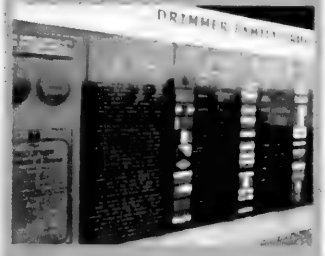
Inside

CJN Debate: Syrian Refugees

As the crisis continues to unfold, how should the Jewish community respond? **PAGES 18-19**



Refurbished Shoah memorial unveiled

Six hundred people attend Yad Vashem's annual event at Earl Bales Park. **PAGE 25**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	6:10 p.m.	7:11 p.m.
Montreal	5:49 p.m.	6:51 p.m.
Ottawa	5:58 p.m.	6:59 p.m.
Toronto	6:14 p.m.	7:15 p.m.
Winnipeg	6:17 p.m.	7:23 p.m.
Calgary	6:23 p.m.	7:30 p.m.
Vancouver	6:02 p.m.	7:07 p.m.

In their own words

The CJN goes one on one with the NDP, Liberal and Conservative leaders as election day nears. **PAGE 7**
PLUS, Results from our readers' poll and comprehensive coverage from the campaign trail. **PAGES 12, 14-17**

Conflicting views on the niqab

Barbara Kay rejects veil **PAGE 10**
Letter slams gov't policy **PAGE 20**
Muslim activist weighs in **PAGE 21**

Do Jews need a pope of our own?

We pray for a Messiah to unite us, yet our lack of uniformity has been our strength. **PAGE 4**

And the winners are...

Alison Pick and Ruth Panofsky highlight 2015 Canadian Jewish Literary Awards. **PAGE 46**

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Sarah Silverman's election endorsement, and Waters gets Stern rebuke

Jewish comedian backs the Dippers

U.S. comedian Sarah Silverman weighed in on the Canadian election Oct. 4 when she tweeted her praise for NDP Leader Tom Mulcair "4 supporting a women's right to wear what she wants without discrimination" – a reference to the ongoing niqab debate. She also tweeted her support for Vancouver-Granville NDP candidate Mira Oreck. Silverman met Oreck, a PR consultant and former Canadian Jewish Congress official, when Oreck helped create a 2012 pro-Barack Obama Internet ad starring Silverman. Oreck told various news outlets the two have kept in touch but aren't close, and she denied claims the unexpected support violated a law against foreigners endorsing candidates in Canadian elections.

Shock jock raps Floyd founder

Radio shock jock Howard Stern ripped Roger Waters, founding member of rock band Pink Floyd, for his support of the boycott Israel movement. "What is with Roger Waters and the Jews?" Stern asked Oct. 6 at the start of a seven-minute rant on Sirius XM Radio, in which he implied Waters is an anti-Semite. The rant was sparked by an open letter Waters published in *Salon* criticizing rocker Jon Bon Jovi for his Oct. 3 gig in Tel Aviv.

Roger Waters

Howard Stern

"The Palestinians are these Arabs that could live in Egypt, they could live in Saudi Arabia, but guess what? Those countries don't want them either," Stern, who is Jewish, said. "Israel has a little tiny country, and it bugs the s--t out of Roger Waters. He can't f---in' deal with it. Where do you want the Jews to go, Roger? You want them just to go back to the concentration camps? What is it you want, f---head?"

Standup in the Holy Land

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld is bringing his stand-up routine to Israel for the first time. Seinfeld will perform in Tel Aviv on Dec. 19, the *Jerusalem Post* reported. The famed comic, who starred in the hit 1990s TV show *Seinfeld*, last visited Israel in 2007 while promoting the DreamWorks animated film *Bee Movie*. Tickets for his show went on sale Oct. 8. Seinfeld's latest project is the Web series *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee*. ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

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The age of Belgian director Chantal Akerman, a daughter of Polish Holocaust survivors and a pioneer in feminist and experiential filmmaking, who reportedly committed suicide last week in Paris.

37

The age of actor James Franco at his Oct. 3 bar mitzvah ceremony, pictures of which he posted on Instagram.

Quotable

We are much better at early identification than we are at doing anything about it.

— Dr. Joel Sadavoy on treating dementia. See full interview on page 58.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Mark Mietkiewicz looks at the history of World Zionist Congresses ahead of the 37th incarnation in Israel this month.

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Letters to the Editor

CIJA's priorities

Mira Sucharov's column ("What really are our community's priorities?" Oct. 1) shines important light on the diversity of policy issues and challenges facing Canadian Jewry.

As she noted, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) recently surveyed nearly 2,000 grassroots community members across the country on their priorities. The study paints a picture of an engaged, passionate, and varied community. Canadian Jewry is as concerned about universal matters of social justice, such as affordable housing for vulnerable Canadians, as we are about Jewish security and continuity, including the rising cost of Jewish education and kosher food. We are as dedicated to advancing human rights in Canada, including a ban on genetic discrimination, as we are to advocating for the right of Israelis to live in peace and defend their children.

Just as our community is not one-dimensional, our approach to advocacy must be comprehensive and ambitious. To settle for less would be to neglect the myriad of challenges before us and fail to live up to the Jewish tradition of activism across the spectrum of policy areas.

Shimon Koffler Fogel, CEO, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
Toronto

Mira Sucharov criticizes CIJA for discouraging Hillels from engaging Peter Beinart during his 2012 speaking tour in Canada. What she fails to mention is that Beinart is a prominent supporter of boycotts of Israelis.

While Beinart "only" wants to boycott settlements, his willingness to lend vocal support for the very same measures advocated by anti-Zionists (and anti-Semites) betrays his own reckless naivete or willful blindness.

If CIJA discouraged Hillel from hosting such a speaker, CIJA deserves applause, not criticism, for taking a principled stand against boycotts, divestment and sanctions regarding Israel.

Ran Ukashi
Winnipeg

In support of Harper

Columnist Bernie Farber, by viewing matters through a political prism, causes harm to the fight against anti-Semitism ("Political differences are no longer *unzera* – between us," Sept. 24).

Farber makes reference to "progressive Zionists who remain fully engaged with the Jewish state" but don't like the policies of the Likud party and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Does he think that the anti-Semites and ayatollahs of the world give a whit as to which political party is governing Israel?

To impugn Prime Minister Stephen Harper's strong support of Israel and the fight against anti-Semitism as fear mongering is destructive and has no foundation.

Canadian Jews and people of good faith recognize that anti-Semitism and the unfair treatment of Israel are not driven by politics, but the banality of evil.

Regrettably, very few world leaders have spoken out so eloquently and clearly as has Stephen Harper.

Sam Mitnick
Cote St. Luc, Quebec

Support anyone but Harper

As a synagogue-affiliated, social work educator, I found Michael Taube's column offensive ("Why Jews should vote for the Tories," Sept. 24).

He boasts that the government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper has moved in the right direction by dealing with "the wasteful spending on bloated social services." So soon after Yom Kippur, and we get a Conservative party booster's haughty glances against social services that help people who are homeless, hungry, or otherwise in despair.

Yet it's been the Harper Conservatives who have worsened poverty and inequality in Canada, via tax cuts for corporations and for rich people, triggering cuts in public revenues, and forcing cuts in social services.

Harper's Conservatives have failed miserably in protecting us from climate change's looming disasters.

As a Zionist, I want Israel to thrive. Instead, Harper is further endangering Israel by supporting its misguided expansion of volatile Jewish settlements in the West Bank on Palestinian territory at the expense of Palestinians.

On Oct. 19, the Conservatives are the worst choice. Let's vote for change.

Ben Carniol
Toronto

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RABBI-2-RABBI

Do we need a Jewish pope?

We pray for a utopian period led by a messianic figure, but Judaism has survived and thrived by expressing itself in multiple forms, without a single leader or uniform approach

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
TEMPLE EMANU-EL-BETH SHOLOM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Korobkin: With all the hype and media attention around Pope Francis' recent visit to the United States, I find myself musing about the state of our people, popeless as we are.

We don't even have a chief rabbi – Israel must have two chief rabbis, one for Sephardim and the other for Ashkenazim. And we certainly don't believe in rabbinical infallibility (just ask my congregants). Still, it's interesting to ponder: if there was a Jewish "pope" in some alternate reality, what would his message be? Would he be liberal or conservative? What colour would his (or her) yarmulke be?

Is there a message you think is universal enough for all Jews that the "Jewish pope" could successfully convey to the world about Judaism and the Jewish People?

Rabbi Grushcow: What a question!

I agree with you that our people certainly are not looking to grant anyone infallibility, nor should they. After all, even the high priest had to confess his sins on Yom Kippur, and rabbis, thankfully, are not even meant to be priests.

But when I think of moral leadership, I think of a rabbi like Sidney Shoham, may his memory be for blessing. He was a giant in the Montreal Jewish community for more than 50 years. He led by example. He was a superb pastoral rabbi, there for people in times of joy and sadness. He was a gifted teacher. And above all, he was a mensch, permeated by a love of other human beings and klal Yisrael. He beamed kindness. And, to me, a relative rabbinic newcomer and a female liberal rabbi, he, an Orthodox rabbi, extended warmth and collegiality. That's the kind of leadership I would want in a Jewish pope.

But I believe anyone worth the title wouldn't want it. And I also believe that our religion has survived and thrived by expressing itself in multiple forms, resistant to a single leader or a uniform approach. None of us know, in the long term, which way is the best way forward, which rabbi will be quoted generations from now and who will be forgotten.

And if we couldn't even agree on a gender, far be it from us to reach consensus on a message – or even the colour of a kippah.

Rabbi Korobkin: And yet, the traditional liturgy is replete with prayers for a future utopian period led by a messianic figure. Such a person is supposed to unite our people at the end of days, so that we truly feel like one nation instead of disparate tribes.

I agree that such a person will need to regard *ahavat Yisrael*, a genuine love for every single Jew, as the highest value, as well as compassion for every living creature. This Messiah is also supposed to lovingly welcome every human being to worship God and live a righteous life.

I think the person who came closest to being a Messiah for our generation was the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and I'm sad that the void since his passing hasn't been filled with another leader possessing that same degree of vision, charisma and love.

We need to be more proactive in creating our future leaders and imbuing them with this kind of *ahavat Yisrael*. It should be the most important value inculcated into our children from a very early age.

Rabbi Grushcow: In the Reform liturgy, we have long since replaced the prayers for a single, human messiah with our hopes for a messianic age. As my mentor, Rabbi Robert Levine, titled his book: "There's no Messiah, and you're it." Each of us bears responsibility for getting closer to that messianic age, instead of waiting for someone else to come and save us.

Do we need to teach *ahavat Yisrael*? One hundred per cent. But for that love to be truly inclusive, it would have to recognize that the norm – and even the ideal – of our broader community is not exclusively Orthodox. It would have to recognize, and honour, that there are Jews making Jewish homes with non-Jews. It would give kavod, respect, to religious leaders across the denominational spectrum. It would celebrate different ways of being Jewish.

I'm not holding my breath. But I believe that another one of the most important Jewish values is hope. Perhaps our dialogue helps bring us one step closer. ■

When my husband died suddenly, my whole world stopped. I didn't even know where to begin with the arrangements. It was 2am. I called Benjamin's. To my surprise, Michael Benjamin himself answered the phone. They took care of every imaginable detail. They even had umbrellas for guests when it rained at the gravesite. I will never forget their wonderful care.

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Editorial e-mail: cjnnfo@gmail.com
Advertising e-mail: adscjn@gmail.com **Website:** www.cjnews.com
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Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation: July 14, 2015

Canadian Heritage / Patrimoine canadien

Postmaster: Please return 2985 and changes of address to CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7.
Postage Paid at Toronto Canada Post Publication Agreement #40010684
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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Publisher and Proprietor: The Canadian Jewish News, a corporation without share capital. Head Office: 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord Ont. L4K 2L7

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From the Archives
Toronto's first chief rabbi

Joseph (Yosef) Weinreb, pictured here in 1938, was the first chief rabbi of Toronto. Born in Romania, he came to Toronto around 1900 and led the city's Shomrai Shabbos congregation. He died on Oct. 15, 1943.

SeeJN | Memorial candles

MIRIAM ALSTER/FLASH90 PHOTO

Young Jewish boys light candles in the shape of a Star of David Oct. 6 at the spot where a Palestinian man killed two Jewish men in a terror attack in the Old City of Jerusalem earlier this month.

From Yoni's Desk

We've done our part, now it's up to you

After a hard-fought campaign, the longest in modern Canadian history, the federal election is now just days away. It's an exciting, and nerve-wracking time, for politicians and voters. Soon enough, we'll all find out who will be Canada's next prime minister, and which political party – or perhaps parties, should the results lead to the formation of a coalition government – will run Parliament.

We couldn't think of a more appropriate way to cap our election coverage than by offering the leaders of the three main parties the opportunity to speak directly to Canadian Jews. Over the last few days, I had the privilege to talk one on one with Stephen Harper, Justin Trudeau and Tom Mulcair (our interview with Green Party leader Elizabeth May ran in the Sept. 24 edition of *The CJN*).

It's a testament to the vigorous political engagement of the Jewish community that the party leaders took time from their busy schedules to offer their thoughts on a wide range of issues, including domestic security, Israel, the Iran nuclear deal, poverty and the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against Israel. (In the interest of fairness, I asked the same questions to each of the leaders, and all three interviews ran to nearly the exact same length.)

Many newspapers and media outlets across Canada have already announced their endorsements for prime minister, and in the coming days more publications will present their own official opinions as to whom they believe Canadians should vote for on Oct. 19. But you won't find any of that in this space.

Of course, our columnists and editorial contributors have been offering their thoughts on the election throughout the campaign, and we have encouraged them to weigh in from any number of angles. Even so, this newspaper has a long-held tradition of non-partisanship, and, frankly, I think that's the right approach.

It's not for us to tell you who to vote for. Our job is to present the facts as neutrally as possible, and I'd like to think we've done a good job of that. The rest is up to you. Good luck.

• • •

Even as Canadian Jews are consumed with the federal election, we watch with trepidation the unfolding situation in Israel, where violent attacks by Arabs against Jews have erupted in recent weeks. (See pages 36, 38 and 40)

The stories are bone-chilling: parents murdered in front of their children; pedestrians stabbed to death as bystanders looked on and did nothing to help; cinderblocks hurled at automobiles, civilians and soldiers; and a spate of wild assaults involving rudimentary weapons.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas set off this wave of terror at the end of September when he accused Israel of scheming to change the status quo on the Temple Mount during a speech at the United Nations. There appears to be no basis for Abbas' claim, but that hasn't stopped some Palestinians from taking him at his word.

In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu instituted a number of new security initiatives. He also banned Knesset members, Jewish and Arab alike, from visiting the Temple Mount. These are not long-term solutions, but then it's hard to see how to move forward productively while the irresponsible Abbas remains an authority figure. ■ — YONI

Who will be Canada's next prime minister?

As election day draws near, *The CJN* speaks to the three party leaders about domestic security, Israel, Iran, BDS, the economy and more

The CJN: How is your campaign going thus far?

Stephen Harper: You never know these things for sure until election day, but our core message is that we're in an unstable global economy and we need a solid economic plan for the next four years, based on lowering people's taxes, making affordable and effective investments and keeping our budget balanced.

That's the big choice here: the other guys are proposing runaway spending and deficits, tax hikes and things that have put other economies into the gutter. And we need to keep moving forward with a positive plan.

The CJN: In your view, how is this campaign different from previous ones?

Harper: There's always all kinds of dynamics that are different. The economy is the number one issue. I think it's been the number one issue for the past couple of campaigns, but I think probably now more than ever that's what people are thinking about. They think about four years ahead and where they want the economy to be.

The CJN: When it comes to domestic security, what will your party do to ensure the security of Canadians?

Harper: We've moved forward with a series of strong legislative measures. What we've certainly tried to do, particularly since the jihadist attacks we had last October, is we've moved forward with a series of measures to make sure that our security and police agencies have all the resources we need, but also all of the modern tools that western security and police agencies have around the world.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

The CJN: How is your campaign going thus far?

Justin Trudeau: It's going very well. We've focused on the big issues that matter to Canadians – economic growth, jobs, help for the middle class and those who are working hard to join it, and we're seeing people respond very positively right across the country.

The CJN: In your view, how is this campaign different from previous ones?

Trudeau: I think what is remarkable about this campaign is just how volatile the electorate is. People are open to a wide range of different options and the longer campaign means that people are taking time to really listen to different proposals and think about who has the better plan for growing our economy, for facing the challenges that we know Canada is facing. I think that is, frankly, to our advantage, because we are very much focused on a concrete and real plan to kick-start our economy and help Canadians.

The CJN: When it comes to domestic security, what will your party do to ensure the security of Canadians?

Trudeau: Canadians expect their government to do two things – protect our security, and defend our rights and freedoms. The Liberal party has gotten that balance right in the past, and we're going to continue to get that balance right in the future. Irwin Cotler, who was justice minister in the times following 9/11, steered through the kind of proposals that made Canada safer, but defended our rights and freedoms.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

The CJN: How is your campaign going thus far?

Tom Mulcair: We're thrilled. We started this week in southwestern Ontario in six Conservative ridings, and we have every intention of winning each and every one of them – those are the ridings hardest hit by the job losses in manufacturing.

We started in Brantford, Ont. We went to Waterloo, Ont. We went to Stratford. We went to London, Sarnia and Essex. And it was an amazing tour. We met thousands and thousands of people who were buoyed by the NDP's message of hope and to do things differently – to get back to a balanced economy and start creating good jobs.

Mr. Harper wants to kill off tens of thousands of new jobs with his [Trans-Pacific Partnership] trade deal. We try to remind people that that's not just a number – each one of those job losses represents a family that loses its livelihood, a community where there's nobody going to the restaurant anymore, more small businesses suffering and closing down. So it's a whole new approach that we're proposing, and we're very uplifted by the reaction we're getting.

The CJN: In your view, how is this campaign different from previous ones?

Mulcair: What's different this time around is that there's hope.

You know, after 148 years of being told we have no choice but to alternate between the Liberals and the Conservatives, there's hope. There's an NDP government in waiting, because, for the first time in our history, we're the official Opposition.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

REFLECTIONS

A modern (Jewish) family

Phyllis Feldman

A few years ago looking around the table at everyone settling into their seats at dinner to celebrate Pesach I remember thinking, "this is not at all how it was when I was growing up."

The week before, my former daughter-in-law Whitney and my son Brandon's fiancé Dyna, spent a Sunday afternoon with me, making matzah balls and baking mandelbroit. At least, we said that's why we got together, but production was way down the list from laughing and making memories. I always enjoyed the family gatherings at my mother's house, but I'm sure I never heard the words fun and prepare used in the same sentence.

All of the family members and any other guests invited to my parents' home for the holidays were white, middle class and Jewish by birth. We didn't know anyone else.

They all even belonged to the same mainstream Conservative synagogue. No one was "divorsssed," and there were definitely no single moms. We were inclusive though because we had two adopted cousins.

At our table we were one Jew by choice, a few people who went to a Reform Temple, one Reconstructionist, one Chinese-Canadian, one Filipina, and one divorced and one single mom, both there with their kids. Also in attendance: one shaved head and a pierced tongue.

To my left Whitney, before marrying my son Jonas, was from a lapsed Anglican home. Her single sister, Samantha, and her delicious four-year-old daughter Delilah were sitting next to Ellen, my nephew Mark's girlfriend, and her two-year-old cherubic son Nathan. To my right, beside my husband Irving on the other side of the table, Dyna, who immigrated from Guangzhou at eight, and then my 92-year-old mother-in-law Bella, Holocaust survivor, and matriarch of the family. Next to her was her Filipina caregiver Lorlie.

Out of the corner of my eye, Marjena, our Polish helper here to keep the kitchen running smoothly, is motioning to me that she's got everything ready to go.

"Who wants to join me to light the candles?" I invite everyone. Whitney is first up, Delilah – climbing on a chair – is already covering her eyes, and Dyna began reading the prayer from transliteration.

At my parent's table, it was assumed all the kids my age, especially the male children, would go to university and make the short list of acceptable professions, and if you were female, at least marry one.

When we start dinner and I hear Brandon, the pilot, ask Jonas, the military recruiter/classical trumpet player, to "Pass the horseradish please," and Dyna, the banker, tells him that Mark, the guitar teacher has it, I think to myself, "I like it so much better this way."

We serve the soup and I wink at the girls, because it's time for the much anticipated matzah ball test. "I like them hard," and "I only like them soft" ping pong back and forth across the table, as we wait for the decision of the 18 judges. Hearing the unanimous declaration of "They're great," the girls exhale, and since this was Dyna's first attempt, under Whitney's supervision, they're both pretty pleased.

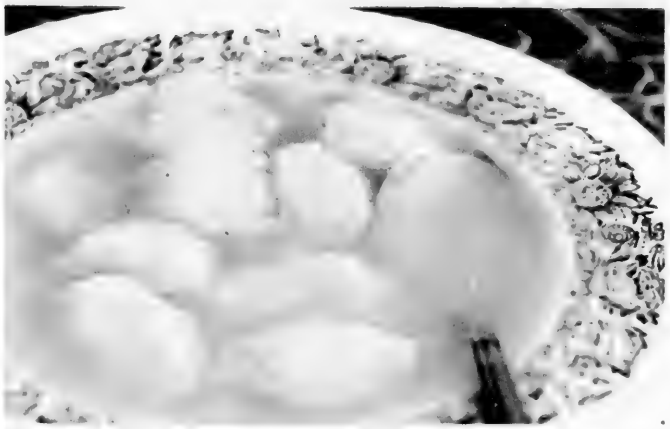
Because our table configuration is a large rectangle, it's easy for everyone to be in four conversations at once. The cousins were laughing at something they saw on YouTube, and Nathan is not as interested in eating as much as chirping "Good yontif," to everyone he can make eye contact with.

At my mother's house none of this would have been possible, because the long table just kept getting longer, eventually becoming a T or an L depending on how many we were.

When we brought out dessert, the bakers got thumbs up on their three varieties of mandelbroit, especially from Bubbie Bella. "I can't believe," she says, "these modern girls can do everything."

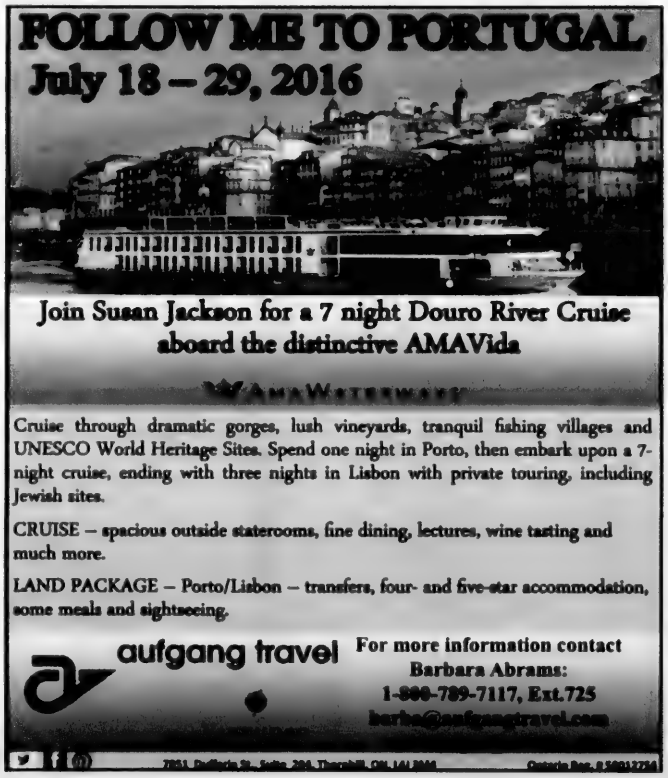
It was a warm night and we all hung out on the deck drinking coffee, until it was time to disperse. When Lorlie starts helping Bubbie on with her sweater, Nathan and Delilah run over and reach up for a hug. Cory and Jamie, two nephews from my side of the family bend down to give her a kiss. "We'll come and visit this week, Bubbie," my niece Lindsay tells her, and then a chorus of, "I love you," from all of her grandchildren including anybody who feels like one. ■

Phyllis Feldman is a writer/producer from Toronto.



Making matzah balls unites a modern Jewish family, says the author.

> *All of the family members and any other guests invited to my parents' home were white, middle class and Jewish by birth. We didn't know anyone else.*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TRUDEAU

Rejection of the niqab is self-defence, not racism

Barbara Kay

In her op-ed in the Oct. 8 *CJN*, Danielle Kubes asks why "Jews have not come out in mass support" of Ishaq Zunera, who refuses to take her citizenship unmasked.

I can't speak for other Jews, but I have long supported a niqab ban in the public sector, and I consider Kubes' alarmist fears of a slippery slope unfounded. Kubes' main points are: a) if we ban the niqab today, tomorrow it will be the kippah; b) it is of no importance that the custom of face cover is rooted in misogyny ("So what?"); and c) that Canadians' objection to the niqab in overwhelming numbers – more than 90 per cent in Quebec and 82 per cent in Canada as a whole, according to polls – is the same "hysteria" that was directed toward turban-wearing Sikhs in the RCMP in 1990.

Beginning with the last point: the Sikh turban issue was entirely situational; the debate revolved around military uniformity, and was not a rejection of the turban in principle. And nobody, for example, has ever made a political issue of the sheitel. Or the hijab. Indeed, Pauline Marois tried hard to push Quebec down the slippery slope with her charter of values 18 months ago and failed miserably. In their rejection, Quebecers made it clear they have no problem with any religious accessories.

Except one: the niqab. Not because they are Islamophobic. Face cover is not one accessory on a continuum. It is an entirely separate phenomenon, illuminated once and for all by Marois' failure to mobilize against the other accessories. Pushback against face cover has nothing to do with Islam. Canadians would consider it indecent if it was a custom amongst Zoroastrians, Raelians or atheists. Neither are identification and security concerns the real issue – they are distracting sidebars.

The niqab is a new and unique social phenomenon in the West. It arouses anxiety, and rightly so, as face cover is inimical to public health. It is a willed barrier to friendly communication, and therefore destructive to the social environment, an obstacle to the trust and social reciprocity upon which healthy communities depend. Rejection of the niqab is not racism; it is social self-defence. When there are few niqabs in one's line of sight, the issue seems trivial. When, as in France and Belgium, there are thousands, it is not trivial.

There are already limitations to the niqab in Canada. In one case, it was ruled against in court for a plaintiff, trumped by the longstanding right of a defendant to see his accuser's face. Why only accusers' faces? Most Canadians see mutual openness as a legally unarticulated, but nevertheless pressing social right. Ironically, the niqab is not permitted to lawyers in Pakistan, voters in Egypt and other countries, on the hajj in Saudi Arabia, or in universities across the Islamic world. Is that also "hysteria"?

To Kubes who seems to believe in unlimited rights on religious obligations (the niqab is only a regional custom, but I'll stipulate it for argument's sake). Do you say "so what?" to polygamy, which is a religious obligation for both men and women in offshoots of Mormonism? If not, why not? It doesn't harm you or me. Yet, most of us feel gender equality rights trump religion on this issue, and to my knowledge, nobody has ever accused those rejecting polygamy as Christophobic.

Kubes appears to willfully ignore the threatening political dimension the niqab represents. Unlike Orthodox Jewish women who have worn sheitels for centuries, it is very doubtful that Ishaq's mother wore a niqab, or even a hijab. The rise of the niqab is not only coincident with, it is politically collaborative with the rise of contemporary Islamism, a triumphalist ideology that quite openly seeks to colonize and transform western democracies.

As Pakistan-born Muslim Raheel Raza recently wrote in the *Toronto Sun*: "[I] never saw a niqab when I was growing up in Karachi, Pakistan… The niqab and burka have nothing to do with Islam. They're the political flags of the Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS, the Taliban, Al Qaeda and Saudi Arabia."

When a symbol is that freighted with hostility to the principles democracies stand for, it is reasonable to set limits to tolerance in the name of cultural self-preservation. Face covers alarm us for good reasons, and it is ethically legitimate to act on them. ■

Packing up after 19 years

Chaim Steinmetz

Packing up a home when you're downsizing is an unnatural task. Humans instinctively accumulate possessions and resist eliminating them. Despite consulting the best-selling advice of Marie Kondo, we find it a tough task to discard items that are theoretically essential, but practically forgotten.

Yet decisions must be made, and possessions must be relinquished. And as I stand surrounded by boxes and packing tape, it's hard not to wax philosophical and wonder: what do we really need to pack?

This question is one Jews have asked themselves multiple times while wandering in exile: what can you pack at a moment's notice? The answer was simple: pack hearts and minds. Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer said the "guiding sentence" of the Jewish mission is: "*Omnia mea mecum porto*," "All my things I carry with me," – that is, that character and wisdom are the only assets of enduring value and are all you ever need. After packing up too many times to count, Jews have learned that it's not what's in your suitcases that really count, it's what you pack in your heart.

And what we pack (and unpack) in our hearts defines our lives. Zak Ebrahim, the son of El Sayid Nosair (the man who assassinated Rabbi Meir Kahane), tells of his mother's reaction when he confided that he no longer accepted his family's radical views: "She looked at me with the weary eyes of someone who had experienced enough dogmatism to last a lifetime, and said, 'I'm tired of hating people.' In that instant, I realized how much negative energy it takes to hold hatred inside of you." After a lifetime of packing their hearts with hate, Zak and his mother realized that it had weighed them down.

Zak is not unique. It's quite common for people to cling to beloved hatreds. Nelson Mandela, who was a genius at unpacking hatred, said, "Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies." We treat old hatreds as precious possessions and let them ruin our own lives instead.

> *Goodbye Montreal. I'm packing you up with me.*

In place of hatred, others choose to pack their heart with love. Seth Mandell runs camps for children who've lost a family member to terror (his own son, Koby, was murdered in a terror attack in 2001). Seth told me a story about one girl who was so grief-stricken that she had begun to cut herself on the wrist. The first day of camp, her counsellor saw the girl's cut and remarked that "time heals all wounds."

The girl reacted angrily and said, "It does not," a reply that was a reference to all wounds, both psychic and physical. But the counsellor persevered in befriending the girl, and the girl had a wonderful time at camp. By the end of the camp, the girl had stopped cutting herself and the wound healed. Noticing this, the counsellor lightheartedly remarked, "I guess time does heal all wounds." The girl responded: "No, it does not… But love heals all wounds." Love is magical, and packing even more love into your heart is always a good idea.

As we pack up our house to leave Montreal, we are also packing with us inspirational memories. I'll pack the memory of the cancer patient who refused to let her disease take away her optimism. I'll pack the memory of the Holocaust survivor who was our synagogue's "candyman," determined to make the world sweet for the next generation. I'll pack the memory of the man who ran to greet each new person in the synagogue and made them feel at home. And I'll pack the memory of a Holocaust survivor who every time there was a celebration, hoisted a l'chaim with a twinkle in his eye, in a moment of personal triumph and joy.

These uplifting memories have changed me, and I will carry them with me forever.

Goodbye Montreal. I'm packing you up with me. ■

Jews are turning right, and it's not cause for rejoicing

Rabbi Dow Marmur

The German translation of Michael Hilton's 1994 book *The Christian Effect on Jewish Life* has the title *Wie es sich christelt, so juedelt es sich* – "as things go for Christians, so they go for Jews." It's an apt paraphrase of this almost untranslatable adage that reminds us of how much our Judaism, particularly the Ashkenazi (European) kind, is influenced by Christianity.

The latest report on American Jewry, recently released by the Pew Research Center, doesn't use the German-Yiddish phrase, but it conveys a similar message in describing the many similarities between Orthodox Judaism and evangelical Christianity in the United States.

Their theologies may be very different, but their sociology and politics are strikingly similar. In general, according to the Pew report, Orthodox Jews resemble white evangelical Protestants more than other Jews. Understandably, for both groups, religion is very important in their lives (over 80 per cent for Orthodox Jews, less than 20 per cent for other Jews). Some 75 per cent of both groups attend worship services regularly, whereas most non-Orthodox Jews only attend very occasionally, and some never.

Evangelicals and Orthodox Jews alike believe that Israel was given to the Jewish People by God. In their expectations of messianic intervention from Heaven, many ultra-Orthodox Jews are opposed to modern Zionism, which set out to bring freedom to Jews on earth. By contrast, the Christian Zionist movement is very strongly supportive of Israel in general and its current government in particular. This trend is now also clearly discernible in Canada.

The success of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, founded by Yechiel Eckstein, an Orthodox rabbi, is one of its many manifestations. The Fellowship is said to have raised some $1.3 billion (US) among Christians to help poor Jews in Israel and elsewhere.

And, of course, Orthodox Jews and evangelical Christians both tend to place themselves on the political right, among Republicans in the United States and Conservatives in Canada. Hence the passionate support for Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his party among Jews, particularly, but not only, the Orthodox. Their parents and grandparents were probably Communists or members of other left-wing parties.

As a consequence, the liberal manifestations of Christianity and Judaism – religiously and politically – are receding. Though a plurality of U.S. Jews still identifies as Reform and probably votes Democrat, Orthodoxy is growing. By all accounts, there are similar trends among Muslims in North America and Europe.

Sociologist Steven Cohen speaks of "the shrinking Jewish middle," because its members intermarry, marry late or not at all, and have fewer children. He anticipates, therefore, a dramatic shift in the composition of North American Jewry, reflecting the growing influence of Orthodox Judaism in the Jewish state and manifest in the clout of its Orthodox political parties.

Ironically, it's thanks to the liberal forces, particularly in the 20th century, that Jews were able not only to leave the ghetto, but also to be accepted as equals in the countries to which they came. They fled Czarist Russia and Fascist regimes in Europe because of oppression there. With time, however, they've come to identify with conservative forces in their chosen countries.

As part of the same trend, Israel has a right-wing coalition government that describes itself as national. It likes to characterize what's left of the centrist Labor Party that dominated Israel in its earlier decades as the "extreme left." The tightening grip of Orthodox political parties on Israeli society – again, as part of the government – is of the same ilk.

One of the effects of this trend may be that Jews who are neither religiously Orthodox nor politically conservative will distance themselves altogether from Judaism and the Jewish polity. The trend is there in the Diaspora through assimilation. In Israel it manifests itself through secularization, which will place many Jews on the margins of Israeli society.

Only those with a warped sense of Jewish history and Jewish destiny would rejoice. ■

Sanctions targeting Iran's human rights abuses aren't radical

Sheryl Saperia

On Sept. 23, Foreign Affairs Minister Rob Nicholson announced that the Conservatives, if re-elected, would amend the Special Economic Measures Act (SEMA) to include gross human rights abuses as new grounds for Canadian sanctions against foreign states, entities and individuals. Whoever forms the next federal government should implement this sound policy to target Tehran's egregious human rights violations. It is entirely consistent with the positions of all three major federal political parties and with Canada's historical stance vis-à-vis Iran.

Many Canadians would be surprised to learn that Canada and Iran have only had full diplomatic relations for six of the last 35 years. Numerous Iranian misdeeds have accumulated to produce today's animosity. The "Canadian Caper," in which Canada orchestrated the rescue of American embassy personnel during the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, closed the door on Canada-Iran relations for a decade. An attempt at rapprochement in the early 1990s was short lived. By 1996, Canada had introduced a "controlled engagement policy," imposing significant limitations on interactions between the two countries.

The Canadian government tightened these limitations further after the brutal torture, rape and murder of Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi by Iranian officials in 2003. By 2005, Canadian interaction with Iran was restricted to discussions on human rights, nuclear non-proliferation, and the Kazemi case, with visits or exchanges by Iranian officials to Canada prohibited. In 2007, the two countries stopped exchanging ambassadors. In 2012, Canada suspended all diplomatic relations with Iran.

In recent years, Ottawa has taken some significant steps to curtail Iran's nuclear proliferation and sponsorship of terrorism. Measures have included imposing SEMA sanctions on Tehran for its illicit nuclear program; designating the regime as a state sponsor of terrorism under the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act; and listing Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Qods Force as a proscribed terrorist entity.

Perhaps the broadest consensus across the three major federal parties when it comes to Iran pertains to domestic repression. For in addition to sowing death and destruction abroad, Iran boasts one of the worst human rights records at home. The Islamic Republic has the world's highest per capita execution rate, with no compunction about executing minors. Homosexuals and ethnic and religious minorities are persecuted. Journalists, lawyers, and human rights defenders are imprisoned. Women are stoned to death for adultery.

It is, therefore, fitting that Canada introduces a resolution every year on the human rights situation in Iran at the United Nations General Assembly, ensuring that the international body, which is all too often biased against liberal democracies like Israel, maintains a focus on Iran for its myriad crimes. Partnering with the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto, the government has also been involved in assisting Iranian human rights activists to evade online censorship. However, more can, and should, be done.

In June 2014, the House of Commons subcommittee on international human rights adopted a motion with the unanimous backing of the three parties, which supported the introduction of targeted SEMA sanctions "against the major Iranian human rights violators complicit in the massive assaults on human rights." This is an idea whose time has come.

Sanctions alone will not solve the Iranian human rights problem, but they can make a difference. Economic sanctions and international condemnation generated enough pressure to bring Tehran to the negotiating table on the nuclear file. The regime must now be convinced that its human rights abuses will be closely monitored and met with a tangible response.

Iran's blatant disregard for human rights has long been at the centre of strained relations between Ottawa and Tehran. Canada should continue its decades-old leadership role in confronting Iran's ongoing crimes – no matter which party forms the next government later this month. Imposing sanctions on countries like Iran that systemically abuse the basic rights of their citizens is a morally and historically appropriate course of action. ■

Sheryl Saperia is director of policy for Canada at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies

News

Poll shows plurality of *CJN* readers support Tories

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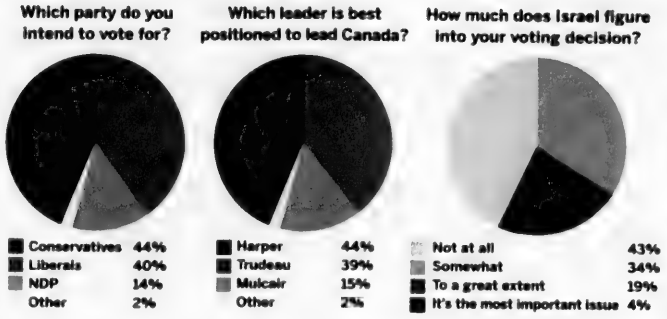

CJN readers have spoken and the results are in: a plurality believe Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservative party are the leader and party of choice in the upcoming national election on Oct. 19.

Harper received 44 per cent of support in an online poll conducted between Sept. 25 and Oct. 7. Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau was second, with 39 per cent support, trailed by NDP Leader Tom Mulcair at 15 per cent.

The Conservative party mirrored its leader's result, gaining the support of 44 per cent of poll participants, edging the Liberals' 40 per cent and the NDP's 14 per cent.

Eleven hundred and nine people took part in the online poll, which asked three questions: "Which party leader do you believe is best positioned to lead Canada?"; "Which party do you intend to vote for?"; and "How much does Israel figure into your voting decision?" On the last question, 43 per cent answered "not at all," while 34 per cent responded "somewhat" and 19 per cent said "to a great extent." Another four per cent said Israel was "the most important issue," bringing the total number who said Israel played a role in their voting to 57 per cent.

Though not considered a scientific poll, the results are interesting, giving credence to the contention that the Conservative party's strong support of Israel – "through fire and water" Conservative candidates often repeat – has resonated with many Jewish voters. Liberal party and NDP candidates have also repeated their strong support of Israel throughout the campaign, particularly in ridings with substantial Jewish populations.

Nelson Wiseman, a professor of political science at the University of Toronto, said some of the poll results were surprising. Only 23 per cent of participants said the party's positions on Israel was an important consideration in where they placed their support, he noted.

Wiseman suggested that had the poll been taken during the last general election, the role of Israel would have been stronger and the support for the Conservatives would have been greater. At that time, the Liberals were led by Michael Ignatieff, who during Israel's war against Hezbollah, had told an audience in Quebec that Israeli actions could amount to war crimes. That contrasted sharply with the Conservative position, he said, noting that an Ipsos exit poll at the time showed Jewish support for the Conservatives at 52 per cent, higher than the national average of around 40 per cent.

Wiseman suggested that the Liberal and NDP emphasis on strong support for Israel may peel back Jewish voters who had left those parties for the Tories. He said Jews are not immune to a nationwide trend, as revealed in polls, that showed voters are eager for change. Not only will that cost the Tories votes, but it should see strategic voters, who had swung to the NDP in a bid to unseat Harper, swing back to the Liberals as a more electable opponent to the Conservatives.

The upshot is to make the re-election of Conservatives more difficult in the ridings with substantial Jewish populations, he said.

Nevertheless, he continued, "I still expect more Jewish support for the Conservatives than was the case historically."

Cjnews.com readers from across the country participated in the poll, along with small numbers in foreign locales such as the United States, Finland and even Cyprus.

The largest number of respondents came from the Greater Toronto Area, but there was also substantial participation in other large urban centres, including Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and the Vancouver area.

The CJN poll shows that readers support Harper and the Tories in greater proportion than the general population. Recent national polls have oscillated greatly, with the Conservative and Liberal parties trading the lead in recent weeks. In some surveys, Conservative support was as high as 37 per cent and as low as 30 per cent, while the Liberals have polled between 27 per cent and 35 per cent. The New Democrats appear to have peaked at 28 per cent and are, as of Oct. 7, at around 24 per cent support.

An Oct. 7 Nanos poll had the Liberals in the lead, with 33.5 per cent, followed by the Tories at 31.6 per cent and the NDP at 24.2 per cent.

Commenting on *The CJN's* poll, *CJN* president Elizabeth Wolfe said, "Our national election poll was the first, to our knowledge, to canvass voter intentions across the Canadian Jewish community. There is always speculation as to how Jews will vote, but until now, there has been no real opportunity to test assumptions. *The CJN* is uniquely positioned to poll Jewish voters and to report on the results.

"This, *The CJN's* inaugural poll, represents a new venture for cjnews.com as the medium to gauge Canadian Jewish opinion and to create a platform for concerned Jews to consider a broad range of perspectives. We look forward to creating many opportunities to engage our readers online and to attract Canadian Jews everywhere to our digital conversation," she said. ■

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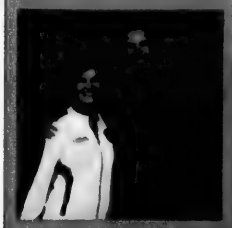
Russell Tanz, ProAm Event Chair, and International Tennis Professionals, Dean Goldfine, Harel Levy, Andy Ram and Frank Dancevic at the Opening ProAm Party on Thursday, September 17th, 2015



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This year, proceeds from the 12th Annual Charity Tennis ProAm went to the Ben Wilder Memorial Court Fund in benefit of Children & Youth At-Risk Program at the Israel Tennis Centers. The ITC's Children & Youth At-Risk Program combines sport, welfare and role modeling in a pressure-free environment, to Jewish, Christian and Muslim children identified as "at risk" by Israel's Ministry of Welfare.

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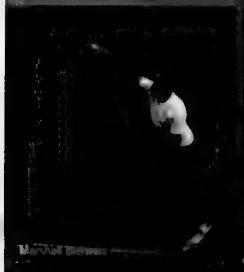
Collectively this event has raised more than $1.4 million since inception 12 years ago. This year's event featured a number of International Tennis Champions including **Harel Levy, Andy Ram, Dean Goldfine** and **Frank Dancevic**.

To contribute to the Ben Wilder Memorial Court Fund, please contact Amy Harrington at 416-444-5700 ext. 2714 or aharrington@israeltenniscenters.org.



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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 15, 2015

Liberals, NDP, Greens debate refugee policy at shul event

SHERI SHEFA
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At a public election debate on Canada's response to the Syrian humanitarian crisis, and refugee policy in general, representatives from the Liberals, NDP and Greens answered questions about their parties' positions on federal health policy for refugees and the Conservatives' controversial "designated countries of origin" rule.

The Oct. 8 event, organized by Darchei Noam Congregation and the Jewish–Refugee Action Network (JRAN), was moderated by *CJN* editor Yoni Goldstein.

The parties were represented by Oakville North-Burlington Green candidate Adnan Shahbaz, York Centre NDP candidate Hal Berman, and Don Valley West Liberal candidate Rob Oliphant.

The Conservative party was invited to participate, but did not send a representative.

The candidates fielded questions from the audience, as well as a panel that included Darchei Noam spiritual leader Rabbi Tina Grimberg, JRAN founding member Philip Berger, and JRAN member Ron Shacter.

Adnan Shahbaz

Rob Oliphant

Hal Berman SHERI SHEFA PHOTOS

Oliphant began by explaining that there are people who are Canadians by chance, having been born here, others who are Canadians by choice – immigrants who have chosen to build a life here – and others who are "Canadians by compassion. Those are the refugees... people who have had to flee their homes as a result of war, as a result of famine, civil war, or international war and have looked for a better place of safety."

Oliphant said the "federal government has to understand that... it has a responsibility to those who are seeking asylum in Canada to ensure fair process, fair health care."

Shahbaz said he's realistic about the Green party's chances of getting elected, but promised that Green MPs would use whatever influence they have to "hold [the government's] feet to the fire in ensuring that they'll get things done."

Shahbaz said the Harper government has spent millions of dollars appealing the Federal Court's recent ruling against its policy on refugee health care funding. In 2012, the Conservative government cancelled health care for refugee claimants.

Both Shahbaz and Berman said their parties would drop the ongoing appeal if they formed the next government, saying that refugee claimants should be entitled to the same health care as Canadian citizens.

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Berman, a palliative care doctor, explained that if a refugee's health care isn't covered and they come to a hospital for treatment, the hospital must foot the bill and the cost may have to be recouped from other areas, in the form of cuts to other services or longer wait times.

"We all pay for this in the end. Whether we pay with poor service, or we pay with money, that is the question," Berman said.

On the issue of abolishing the designated country of origin (DCO) policy, which was put in place to deter people from "safe" countries from applying to Canada as refugees, Berman and Shahbaz said their parties would drop the policy if elected.

"It doesn't matter where they come from. People who flee a place, if they do so legitimately… they are discriminated against in their country of origin… for religion, sexual orientation, certain practices, whatever. If someone feels that they are in danger, it doesn't matter where they come from," Berman said.

Oliphant said "there is something fundamentally wrong about this, fundamentally un-Canadian, and fundamentally contrary to everything we understand about human rights.

"What we have said is refugee determination is based on the individual's experience and their degree of safety and persecution, no matter where they are from."

> *The reality is, this is four years into the largest humanitarian crisis since World War II… and we are taking baby steps*

Oliphant added that until three years ago, all claimants, regardless of their country of origin, went through a rigorous process to determine their eligibility, and a Liberal government "will return [to] a sane way of dealing with refugees."

When an audience member challenged the Liberal record of accepting refugees under former Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien, pointing out that the numbers accepted into Canada under his leadership were comparable to those under the current Conservative government, Oliphant said, "I stopped playing the numbers game… Do I think the Liberal record is absolutely perfect? Absolutely not. Do I think that if you look at the history of Canada, which governments have done a better job than others around those two issues – immigrants and refugees – I would say it's the Liberal party."

Shahbaz said the DCO policy contributes to a two-tier immigration system.

"The idea of the tier system that has been implemented in Canada … is a very dangerous and slippery slope that has started over the past few years. We need to be aware of it, and we need to fight against it," Shahbaz said.

On the subject of whether Canada is doing enough for Syrian refugees, Oliphant said, "when we saw the image of Alan Kurdi on the beach in Turkey, Canadians were horrified and woke up.

"The reality is, this is four years into the largest humanitarian crisis since World War II… and we are taking baby steps," he said, adding that the Liberals have committed to bring in 25,000 refugees before the end of this year.

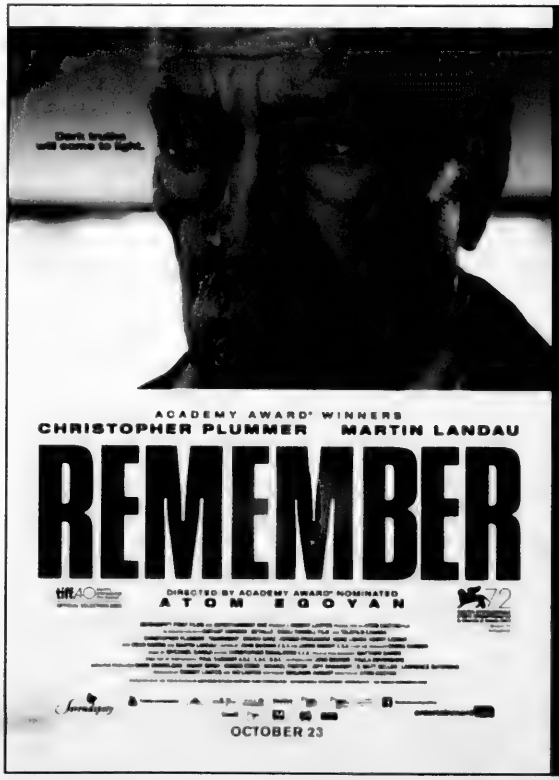
Shahbaz said "this is one of those moments in history right now where we are going to be judged in the future, in how we are handling this huge crisis."

Berman said an NDP government would not impose a cap on refugees who have family sponsorship and would ensure that all have access to health care.

"Are we making enough of an effort? The answer is no… The best thing we can do to help the refugees in Syria is to elect a different government," Berman said.

"If there is trouble in the world and we are a safe haven, we need to step up."

In response to a question from a boy in the audience, Berman said that if the Conservatives win a minority on Oct. 19, Mulcair would work with Trudeau's Liberals, because "Harper is the worst threat to Canada that we face right now – even greater than ISIS." ■



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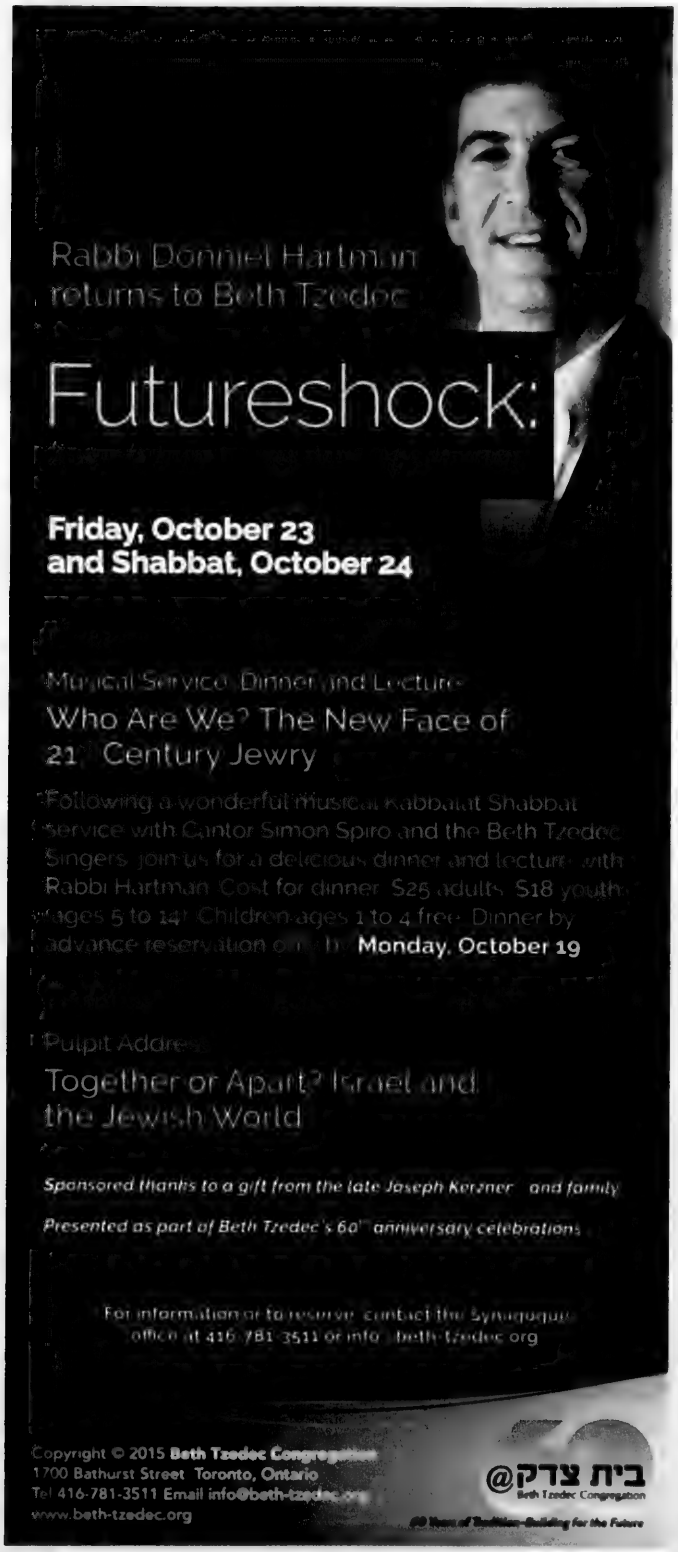
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CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK

Cultural and religious issues dominate as election day nears

Daniel Wolgelerenter

Thank God for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). I say that not because trade is an inherently Jewish issue, nor because I know for certain the recently negotiated deal will be good for Canada, especially since its details have yet to be released.

Irrespective of its long-term effects, the TPP might be our only hope to reorient electoral discussions toward an issue – the economy – that actually affects the well-being of large numbers of Canadians.

If so, it will offer a change from the debates that have dominated the campaign for the last month or so.

Barely seven weeks ago, news photos of little Alan Kurdi's dead body provoked a (perhaps overdue) groundswell of concern for the four million refugees created by Syria's brutal civil war. The sudden surge of interest blindsided the governing Conservatives, whose reaction was seen in many quarters as hard-hearted.

It seemed the issue might sink the Tories, especially in the wake of shaky economic numbers (which have since improved), as well as scandals and polls suggesting an appetite for change.

But they've since regained their footing. In addition to standing firm on the refugee file, they've connected with large numbers of Canadians on the issues of revoking the naturalized citizenship of convicted terrorists; wearing a niqab at citizenship swearing-in ceremonies and a proposed ban on them in the public service; and a pledge to set up a phone line for people to report "barbaric cultural practices."

The moves have stabilized, and perhaps even improved, Conservative polling numbers without requiring costly election promises.

To start, they refused to alienate their base by retreating from their cautious – or what some call xenophobic – position on the Syrian crisis. Meanwhile, sympathetic news outlets have suggested that the wave of Syrian refugees has been compromised by Islamist infiltrators intent on bringing sharia law to the West, and that many of the refugees aren't even Syrian.

Around the same time, they caught a break when the Federal Court of Appeal upheld a lower court ruling that the government's 2011 ban on niqabs – full face veils – at citizenship oath ceremonies was "unlawful." The ban affected a tiny number of women – two since 2011 – who have tried to take the oath with their faces covered (after having their identities confirmed in private), but the ruling gave the party an opening to raise the issue.

Polls say the Conservative position is popular with a large majority of the electorate, especially in Quebec, where it appears to be moving votes from the NDP to the Tories and Bloc Québécois.

Then came word the government wanted to revoke the citizenship of a Canadian-born Muslim man with dual Pakistani citizenship (allegedly through his naturalized, Pakistani-born Canadian parents) who was convicted in a terror plot to bomb targets in southern Ontario.

Finally, last week, the party announced plans for the "barbaric cultural practices" hotline, while Prime Minister Stephen Harper himself pushed the niqab issue further when he proposed the public service ban in a CBC interview.

When the Parti Québécois proposed banning head coverings for civil servants in Quebec in 2013, Jews led opposition to the idea, even though it was a thinly veiled swipe at Muslims.

This time, some Jews are actively supporting a similar idea from the federal Tories, though most are standing idly by. (A grassroots group led by prominent Jews in Toronto is a notable exception.)

As many Muslim commentators have pointed out, the niqab is anti-woman and not mandated by Islamic law. But some Jews might find themselves in the hard-to-defend position of having denounced one proposal, but not the other.

Jews may also find it odd to criticize a woman's decision – taken "freely" or not – to wear any article of clothing when modesty requirements for observant Jewish women, though perhaps less obtrusive than face veils, are similarly seen as oppressive, sometimes even by fellow Jews.

Harper himself spoke out, albeit mildly, against the PQ's charter of values, though he now praises a niqab ban for civil servants being proposed by Quebec's current Liberal government.

As for the hotline, we can only hope that no one calls about the "barbaric" practices of Jewish ritual slaughter and circumcision, or "oppressive" arranged marriages among haredim.

The TPP may ultimately change the channel on this debate, but even if it doesn't, we'll soon find out whether the Conservatives have played their hand just right on these cultural issues, or showed their cards too early. ■

Contested Mount Royal race nearing the end

JANICE ARNOLD
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When Robert Libman made known his intention to seek the Conservative nomination in Mount Royal in the summer of 2014 he did so with the conviction that Jewish voters are so grateful to Stephen Harper that their support would be enough wrest the riding from the Liberals after 75 years.

He believed Harper and his government's unwavering backing of Israel and strong stand against anti-Semitism and terrorism since 2006 would be enough to bridge the 2,200-vote gap between the Liberals and the Tories in Mount Royal in the 2011 federal election.

Analyses of the polls that year and anecdotal evidence indicated that a majority of Jews, historically solidly Liberal, voted Conservative. Liberal Irwin Cotler's once 90 per cent-plus ballot share declined to less than 42 per cent.

With the highly respected Cotler exiting politics after 16 years, it has been widely thought that even more Jews would switch to the Tories this time around.

And Libman is a strong candidate. Older voters especially remember him as the 20-something upstart who founded the English-rights protest Equality Party and led it to four seats in the National Assembly in 1989. He upset the Liberals in D'Arcy McGee, the "Jewish" provincial riding that had always been Liberal.

He is a former Côte St. Luc mayor (as well as Hampstead and Montreal West during the merger) and was a member of Montreal's executive committee with expertise in urban planning.

The Conservative party has made clear that it believes it can make a breakthrough in Mount Royal (it currently holds five Quebec seats, none in the Montreal area.) Harper's first stop on the very day the writ was dropped on Aug. 2 was at the YM-YWHA, in Mount Royal.

During the High Holidays, large Conservative posters wishing Jews a Shanah Tovah were put up near 10 synagogues. They bore a photo of Harper at the Western Wall and quoted the prime minister from his 2014 address to the Knesset: "Through fire and water, Canada will stand with Israel."

Despite an aggressive campaign, Libman, 54, is not coasting to victory. Liberal candidate Anthony Housefather, who launched his nomination bid back in March 2014, has been a tenacious opponent.

The poll-aggregating site ThreeHundredEight.com projected on Oct. 7 an 81 per cent likelihood that the Liberals will win Mount Royal. The Liberals are averaging 51 per cent support, the Conservatives 35.5 per cent and the New Democrats, whose candidate is Mario Jacinto Rimbao, 9.7 per cent among decided voters.

Marvin Rotrand, left, and Stephen Bronfman formally endorsed Liberal Anthony Housefather.

Rimbao, who is prominent in the politically active Filipino community, remains the wild card depending on how many votes he can pull away from the leading contenders, who both are making special pitches to that community.

Rimbao also has his Jewish supporters, notably the NDP riding association president Jimmy Gutman, who says he is drawn to the party for ideological reasons. Harper's support for Israel is more about backing the policies of Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, than about genuine concern for what's best for the people of Israel, in his opinion.

Libman refuted a Mainstreet/Postmedia poll published Sept. 24 showing Housefather had a 15-point lead over him. Libman claims the poll was a "sham" because Mainstreet is run by Quito Maggi, a Liberal party organizer and former Liberal party president.

"It's a bogus poll and contradicted by our hard numbers, which show a very close race in Mount Royal," he emailed *The CJN*. "The Liberals did the same thing in the last election where they targeted specific sectors of the riding only where their support was strong... They are spinning numbers to create a false impression."

While Libman has emphasized that only the Conservatives assure "unequivocal" support for Israel, Housefather recognized from the outset that Mount Royal is culturally diverse. About a third of its electors are Jewish, but their traditionally higher than average turnout may give that figure extra weight.

Housefather, 45, the current mayor of Côte St. Luc, has cultivated support among the many different ethnic groups in the riding, many of them visible minorities – which traditionally have been Liberal.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

Meet Spencer Brasch, a student at Yeshiva University. On a pre-med track, Spencer is an Honors student pursuing a dual major in biology and music, who also finds time to compete on YU's NCAA Division I fencing team. His commitment to Torah study is actualized as he delves into shiur with distinguished Roshei Yeshiva in our world class Beit Midrash.

Individual attention and career planning are important to him, so Spencer chose Yeshiva University because it enables him to balance his academic goals with his religious commitment. This is the essence of Torah U'Madda and what sets YU apart.

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GUEST VOICE

We should only welcome people who actually need help

Donald Carr

For the past several years, millions of people have fled Syria, survivors of the barrel bombs and other vicious assaults by Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces and by the many independent rebel warlords in that country's civil war. Until recently, there had been a few references from time to time to the situation in the western press. The United Nations called for funding. The western response was feeble. There was no response from wealthy Arab states.

These wanderers are far from homogenous. In addition to Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims and Alawis, they include Druze, Kurds and members of several different Christian sects. Over time, they have been joined by Yazidis and other ethnic groups escaping from barbarous fundamentalists such as the Islamic State (ISIS), Al Qaeda and Al Nusra. Many of them were unable to seek refuge in camps set up in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon, because they were persecuted minorities, fearful of the reaction of the camps' inhabitants. (One has to be thankful that no Jews were left in Syria to suffer a worse fate.)

Suddenly, within the last few weeks, faced with the image of a lone child washed up on a beach or moved by pictures of dispossessed masses clamouring at barbed-wire fences in Hungary, Serbia and Croatia, the West's conscience has awakened.

In Canada, the urge to be hosts to "Syrian refugees" is now not only acceptable, but, to many, an imperative. Among these activated groups are synagogues and rabbis who have joined in the chorus to raise funds for, and to sponsor the resettlement of, "Syrian refugees" here. Several have, amazingly and quite inappropriately, likened the current situation to that of the Shoah, when so many countries – including Canada – shunned our hapless people.

In their plea for funds and sponsorship, little attention has been paid to who these "Syrian refugees" include, or to distinguishing the true refugees from those who are part of the infiltration into the masses by members of ISIS, Syria's secret police, Assad's army, or their thousands of willing co-operators. No concern is being shown for their inevitable demand that the host countries adopt sharia law. Nobody is asking why recent news clips show primarily able-bodied and healthy-looking young men and few women, elderly or infirm people.

> *Little attention has been paid to who these 'Syrian refugees' include*

In a recent meeting, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) wisely proposed to the king of Jordan that attempts be made in Canada to provide aid and funding to assist in looking after true refugees from Syria in his country, rather than support their wholesale acceptance in Canada or elsewhere.

Recklessly rushing to avoid a misplaced sense of guilt – a familiar Jewish trait – that we will be accused of doing what was done to refugees from the Shoah, as well as not seeking the facts or being oblivious to them, is plainly wrong.

Relief and haven should be tendered to those who are truly refugees. A home should be provided and sponsorship offered to those who will not be intent on influencing their host countries into adopting sharia law, to those who are not "plants" by vicious fundamentalists intent on founding a new caliphate here, and to those who do not have blood of the innocents on their hands.

Let's first welcome Yazidis, Christians, Druze, Kurds and those other persecuted minorities who can clearly demonstrate their innocence and their intention to live harmoniously with their Canadian neighbours-to-be. ■

Donald Carr is chairman emeritus of the Canadian Jewish News; a past president of the United Jewish Welfare Fund in Toronto, the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto and other communal organizations; and a practising lawyer in Toronto.

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GUEST VOICE

The time to act on the crisis is now

By Mitchell Goldberg and Rabbi Arthur Bielfeld

Images of three-year-old Alan Kurdi's body washed ashore evoke a special resonance for Jews. We know all too well the horrors of persecution and being shunned by the world. That is why Canadian Jewry has always been at the forefront of refugee protection. We are proud that Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) has stepped up to the plate and synagogues across Canada are beginning the process of submitting private sponsorships for Syrians.

Last year, the Jewish Refugee Action Network (JRAN) and the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers (CARL) joined many faith and human rights groups in calling upon the government to create special measures for Syrian refugees. Yet the government did nothing for the Syrian Canadians staggering under the lengthy processing delays for family reunification applications, sticking instead with its modest plan to resettle 10,000 Syrians over three years.

Over the past few weeks there have been a range of numbers introduced by the government to justify its approach to the refugee crisis. Here is the number that matters: zero.

Zero is the number of new refugee resettlement places created by Canada since the Syrian civil war began. All we have done is require that many of Canada's existing resettlement spots shift from other countries toward Syrians. That's bad news if you're fleeing violence in Congo, Sudan or Eritrea.

Faced with five million Syrian refugees and 20 million refugees globally, our government's response has been to play tricks with statistics and claim credit for things it has not done.

While mayors, premiers, former cabinet ministers, prime ministers, faith groups, opposition parties and the majority of Canadians clamour for the current government to muster the political will to act, zero is also the number of times that the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) has spoken up.

Recently, CIJA missed yet another opportunity to act when it dispatched a memo to its members listing web links for private sponsorships, mentioning its plan to donate funds to the Kingdom of Jordan for refugee relief work, and playing number games with Canada's refugee resettlement program for Syrians and Iraqis.

> *Our government's response has been to play tricks with statistics and claim credit for things it has not done.*

CIJA's failure to call for meaningful government action for Syrian refugees compounds its near silence on the government's recent cuts to refugee health care and the discriminatory inland refugee determination process, even after both enactments were struck down by the Federal Court.

Is the government right to severely restrict the numbers of refugees given the security threats of jihadists? Once upon a time, our governments brandished the security threat of "trouble-making Jews" as an excuse for its anti-Semitic refugee policies. Today, security experts tell us that we simply need to put in place the resources to conduct quick but robust security screening.

We've accomplished this in every major humanitarian crisis since World War II. Only a lack of political will prevents us from succeeding again.

A crisis as large as what happened to the little boy in that photo requires a willingness to speak truth to power and put partisanship aside. It is not too late for CIJA to remember that "we were all slaves in Egypt." And it's not too late for the government to recall that we are all "our brother's keepers."

The time to act is now. ■

Mitchell Goldberg is president of the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers. Rabbi Arthur Bielfeld is founder and executive member of the Jewish Refugee Action Network.

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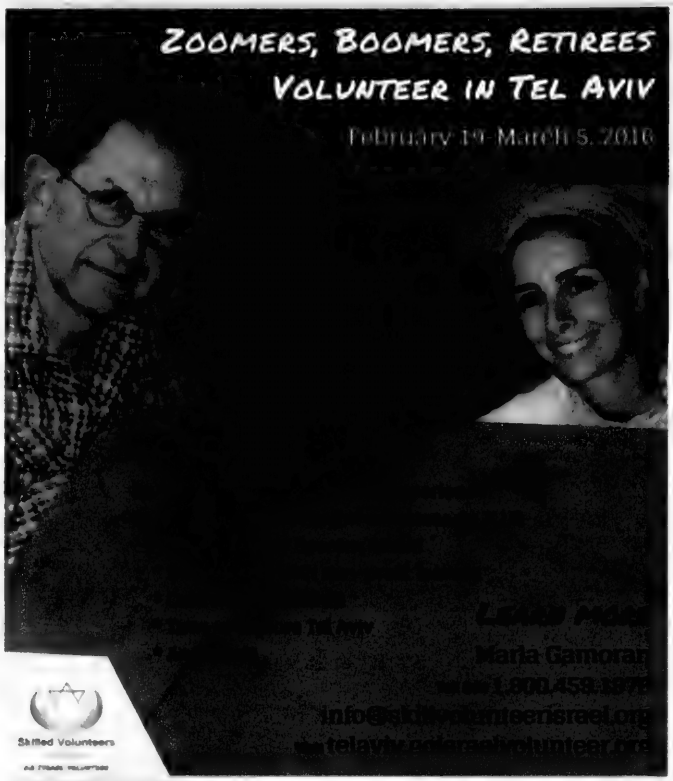

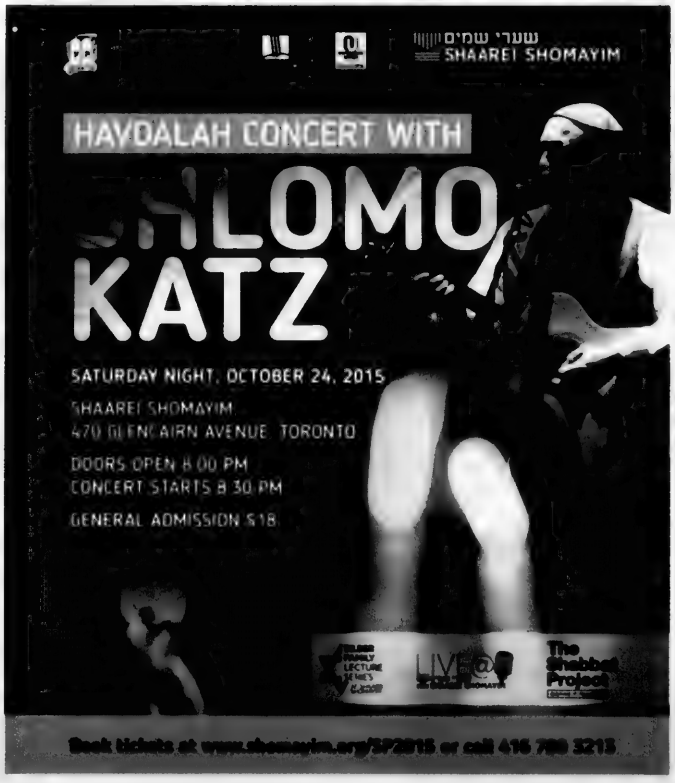

Letter sets out Jewish case against niqab citizenship ban

PAUL LUNGEN
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More than 120 prominent members of the Jewish community have issued a public letter affirming their support for Muslim women who choose to wear a face covering during citizenship swearing-in ceremonies and in other public venues.

The letter, published last week in the *Globe and Mail*, attacks Prime Minister Stephen Harper for unleashing "bigotry and xenophobia against an entire group in Canadian society," and it cites Canadian values and the historic experience of Jews as motivation for taking a stand against "the dangers of scapegoating and victimization.

"Observing one's faith in a way that harms no others is not at odds with Canadian values. It is the essence of Canadian values. So is gender equality. We wish our government had some credibility in speaking on this matter," the letter states.

Myer Siemiatycki, a professor of politics and public administration at Ryerson University, said the letter was drafted, distributed and printed within a 24-hour span. It was sent to members of three Toronto synagogues – Holy Blossom Temple, Darchei Noam Congregation and the Danforth Jewish Circle. The recipients in turn passed it along and within a day, 125 people had signed it.

"The point was to offer a Jewish voice in this debate and to say the stigmatizing and vilification of a religion is abhorrent, particularly to Jews," Siemiatycki said.

The letter was written from a perspective informed by Jewish history, where Jews were often targeted as a religious minority and suffered "painful stigmatization... We know what that feels like from our history," he said.

Siemiatycki said the Conservatives had fastened on the niqab issue for crass political motives to win votes in the current election campaign. He rejected poll results that suggest a large majority of Canadians support banning the niqab in citizenship ceremonies.

The issue, Siemiatycki said, was a matter of religious rights that are protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These rights cannot by removed even if a majority wants to, he said, adding such a move could open the door to further abridgments of religious rights that could one day target Jews.

Siemiatycki called the controversy over the niqab "a phony war," since only two women out of 700,000 people who've gone through the citizenship ceremony have worn it – and only after revealing their identities in private to female officers.

Ryerson professor Myer Siemiatycki says the Tories are playing politics with rights.

> *The point was to offer a Jewish voice in this debate and to say the stigmatizing and vilification of a religion is abhorrent, particularly to Jews.*

Nancy Ruth, one of the signatories, said, "I feel strongly about a person's freedom of choice and the right to display that choice – as long as it does not infringe upon the rights of others, nor incite hatred toward others."

Harold Troper, a professor at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, said "everyone should be offended by the effort to turn Canadian against Canadian, to use ethnic, religious prejudice as a way of getting votes.

"Jews should be especially offended by this. Jews should be very sensitive and concerned about a state that would use religious prejudice to political effect," he said. ■

Muslim activist addresses Canadian niqab debate

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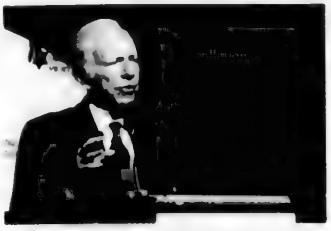

Former U.S. senator Joe Lieberman was the keynote speaker at Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center's State of the Union dinner. JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

Both from a political and a religious perspective, during any "identity-sensitive" situation, a person should be expected to show his or her face, British Muslim activist and author Maajid Nawaz said during the question-and-answer portion of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies' State of the Union Dinner.

He was responding to moderator and Canadian journalist Evan Solomon's request that he comment on the Canadian government's attempts to ban women from taking a citizenship oath while wearing a niqab.

Held Oct. 7 at the Eglinton Grand in Toronto and attended by about 350 people, the event's purpose was to explore critical issues facing western democracies.

"Even in Saudi Arabia, does any woman have her face uncovered in her passport photo? They all do," Nawaz added.

His comment elicited a crash of applause from the audience.

The co-founder of Quilliam, a London-based think tank focused on counter-extremism, and author of the 2012 memoir *Radical: My Journey out of Islamist Extremism*, Nawaz and former U.S. senator and vice-presidential nominee Joe Lieberman were the evening's speakers.

Before Lieberman's keynote address, Nawaz spoke about his transformation from a disenfranchised and radicalized Muslim youth to an outspoken critic of Islamist extremism.

As a young man, he became a member of the radical Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir and was imprisoned in Egypt from 2001 to 2006, renouncing his Islamist past upon his release.

The constant racism and exclusion he experienced as a teenager in the United Kingdom largely contributed to his becoming radicalized, he said, emphasizing that integration into the wider culture of a country is key to thwarting extremism in Muslim communities.

He said Canada should heed this, especially as it deals with an influx of immigrants and refugees from the Middle East.

During the question period, Solomon didn't explain that Zunera Ishaq, the Pakistani woman who took the government to court for insisting she remove her niqab during the public swearing-in ceremony, had agreed when applying for citizenship in 2013 that she would unveil herself to an official in private before taking the citizenship test, but wanted to keep it on while taking her oath.

The CJN asked Nawaz if he supports the ban even though the Conservative government has said it proposed it not as a security measure per se, but because wearing the niqab during the ceremony is an affront to Canadian values.

He replied, "I say as a Muslim that there are no religious reasons for not removing the face veil in the face of the law of a country that requires you to do so in *specific* situations. I don't subscribe to the French model of banning it on the streets."

He stressed, however, "I'm aware this [issue] has become a bit of a political football in Canada, and I don't want my comments to be used by either side politically."

Lieberman's speech focused on the way the Jewish community's standing has shifted in the United States during his lifetime.

Though he grew up in what he called "the shadow of the Holocaust," Lieberman said, he also came of age in the United States during a period of immense optimism, openness and growth, where he didn't feel he had to assimilate in order to be considered "a good American."

Being an observant Jew never stopped him from being elected as a state senator, attorney general and Democratic nominee for vice-president in the 2000 election, he said.

He went on to describe how the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, the existential threat Iran poses to Israel and anti-Israel sentiment on many university campuses make him wonder if "history is turning against us."

To make sure it doesn't, Lieberman said, we as Jews have to stand up and fight for change wherever possible.

He also addressed Islamist extremism, noting that Jews must rise to the defence of Muslims and build bridges with the wider Muslim world, understanding that the extremists in their midst are a minority.

Still, he said, a small number of people can "do terrible damage to values we hold dear," adding that we must ensure young people aren't, as Nawaz was, drawn into extremist groups. ■

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Career preparation is very important to Lee. She chose Yeshiva University because it enables her to balance academic goals with her religious commitment, offering her the dual curriculum in Jewish and General studies. This is the essence of Torah U'Madda and what sets YU apart.
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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 15, 2015

Harper: 'We will not tolerate the singling out of Israel'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Things like the ability to share information on security threats among themselves, to take down recruitment websites, to make sure that it's basically a crime to spread terrorism or the advocacy of terrorism. So we've moved forward on a lot of fronts.

We're also investing in anti-radicalization programs. Of course, a big difference between now and, say, a number of years ago, is we're now actively engaged in Iraq and Syria in the fight against the so-called Islamic State, which obviously presents a pretty grave threat to the security of Canada and our allies.

The CJN: What is your view of the Iran deal? If you are elected prime minister, how would you go about trying to influence change in Tehran's behaviour? What is Canada's role to play on this issue?

Harper: Our allies have concluded an agreement with Iran on its nuclear program that is designed to make sure Iran respects international norms, doesn't develop a weapon and that we avoid some kind of a military confrontation around this. All we can do, I think, is, essentially, congratulate our allies on their best efforts.

I don't mind saying that we maintain a fair degree of skepticism about Iran, about whether it will adhere to the terms of this agreement. But, we'll judge Iran by its actions, not by its words.

We will continue to raise concerns about Iran's broader destabilizing agenda – not just its nuclear weapons program, but its systematic, extreme violations of human rights, its trends for violence around the region, its ongoing threats to the State of Israel. We consider these things pretty serious issues, and so a big difference between us and the Liberal party is that we are certainly not going to rush to normalize relations with Iran when it takes these kinds of positions in the world.

The CJN: Where does the Conservative party stand on Israel, and the balance between security for the Jewish state and peace with the Palestinians?

Harper: Our position has always been that we need to have a negotiated two-state solution, where we have two states living in harmony that are both peaceful and secure and democratic. We think that unilateral actions to try to attain recognition for a Palestinian state are unjustified – we generally are not for unilateral actions on either side.

But under this government, Canada has taken a very strong and, frankly unfortunately, unique stand in the international community that we will not tolerate or go along with the singling out of Israel for blame in the problems of the Middle East. It's just not true and not justified. And this government will continue to stand by the one, strong western democracy and ally that we have in that region.

The CJN: Where do you stand on the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement?

Harper: These movements to boycott Israel, obviously we denounce them. They are based on a systematic policy of trying to single out and blame Israel in a way that is simply not justified if you look at the records of other countries in the region.

> *This government will continue to stand by the one, strong, western democracy in that region.*

And, frankly, I find a lot of it rooted in a hatred of Israel and a not very well disguised anti-Semitism that this party absolutely will have nothing to do with.

The CJN: Poverty is an important issue for the Jewish community. What would your government do to help alleviate poverty in Canada?

Harper: We've taken a whole lot of measures. I'm pleased to see that we are not only one of the few advanced economies that has been able to grow over the past 10 years with all this global economic uncertainty, but we've actually seen growth in all income levels, including the lowest levels.

We brought in a number of measures, like Universal Childcare Benefits and the biggest increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement for our poor seniors in a quarter-century. We've done a lot of things to try and make sure that people, including those at the lowest income levels, have more [money] in their pockets.

And, of course, our biggest single agenda is to make sure we have a program that will create jobs going forward so that people have opportunity.

The CJN: Finally, what is your message to Jewish voters across this country?

Harper: I have the same broad message to all Canadians, which is we are in an unstable global economy, and the only party that has a realistic plan to grow this economy and create jobs is the Conservative party. The other parties' plans are based on out-of-control spending that would be financed by tax hikes that would hurt our economy and, in the case of the Liberals, by deficits, which means they can't really pay for the things they are promising people.

We're laying out a series of measures, whether it's the home renovation tax credit, [tax] cuts for small business, more help for single seniors, enhancements to registered education savings plans – the things we are laying out are all things we can afford without raising taxes and while balancing our budget. These are the things that create jobs. So, we ask people to think about the big choice, which is our plan – low taxes, balanced budgets, more jobs – or on the other side, higher taxes, permanent deficits and fewer jobs.

To Jewish voters, specifically, I think there is one party, and, frankly, one government in the world, that has been very consistent in our support for the State of Israel of the Jewish People, and standing up absolutely unconditionally and consistently against anti-Israel and anti-Semitic views.

And that is the Conservative Party of Canada. It's a matter of principle for us, and we will continue to do that. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Trudeau: 'I am opposed to the BDS movement'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

And that's where we agree with Mr. Harper's approach on Bill C-51, in terms of the elements in it that actually increase security in direct and meaningful ways for Canadians.

But we disagree in that they didn't go far enough to bring in proper and robust oversight by parliamentarians of our national security agencies, for example. So what we're committed to doing is what our Five Eyes allies all do (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States), which is create a committee of parliamentarians to ensure that our security agencies and police are respecting peoples' rights and freedoms – but at the same time are doing everything they can to keep Canadians safe.

> *I think that it's an example of the new form of anti-Semitism in the world*

Mr. Harper doesn't think elected parliamentarians should be doing that.

The CJN: What is your view of the Iran deal? If you are elected prime minister, how would you go about trying to influence change in Tehran's behaviour? What is Canada's role to play on this issue?

Trudeau: We have to realize that a nuclear-armed Iran is a threat not just to the region, but to global stability and security, and is absolutely unacceptable. The international community needs to do everything it can to ensure that Iran does not develop nuclear weapons. And that's why we take the P5+1 deal as a good step in the right direction – one that obviously needs to be carefully and closely monitored to ensure that it is having the necessary impact.

But I think we're still a long way from Iran actually being able to rejoin in any meaningful sense the community of nations. It's not just a challenge of its nuclear ambitions, it's a challenge around state-sponsored terrorism throughout the Middle East and beyond, and as well the complete disregard for human rights within their own country.

The CJN: Where does the Liberal party stand on Israel, and the balance between security for the Jewish state and peace with the Palestinians?

Trudeau: We feel that the only way to achieve peace in this situation is a two-state solution of a secure, democratic, stable Israel alongside a secure, democratic, stable Palestinian state. And the way to achieve that is direct negotiations between the two parties.

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It's a process that is hindered by unilateral actions by either side, and we need to ensure that we are moving toward that two-state solution in a meaningful and responsible way.

The CJN: Where do you stand on the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement?

Trudeau: I'm opposed to the BDS movement. I think that it's an example of the new form of anti-Semitism in the world, as Irwin Cotler points out, an example of the three "Ds": demonization of Israel, delegitimization of Israel, and double standard applied toward Israel.

I'm all for freedom of speech and expression in Canada, and we need to be sure we're defending that. But when Canadian university students are feeling unsafe on their way to classes because of BDS or Israel Apartheid Week, that just goes against Canadian values. And I have said so, not just in news interviews, but in person on university campuses.

The CJN: Poverty is an important issue for the Jewish community. What would your government do to help alleviate poverty in Canada?

> *The Combined Jewish Appeal...has shown extraordinary leadership in addressing the needs of so many people struggling to make ends meet within the Jewish community.*

Trudeau: First of all, even though it's not always seen and addressed, the Combined Jewish Appeal and other initiatives have shown extraordinary leadership in addressing the needs of so many people struggling to make ends meet within the Jewish community, and across communities.

The Liberal party is committed to helping people living in poverty in Canada. We are offering a more generous Canada Child Benefit than what Mr. Harper offers – and the reason we're able to do that is we are going to be stopping the sending of government cheques to millionaire families just because they have children. Instead, we are going to be more generous to families in the middle class and particularly low-income families. And that initiative has been studied by the Library of Parliament and we will be lifting 315,000 kids out of poverty by giving, for example, a cheque to a low-income family for a kid under six of $533 a month, tax-free.

We're going to be increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement for low-income, single seniors by 10 per cent. That's an extra $920 every year for our most vulnerable seniors. So this is something we are doing concretely to help address the crippling poverty that far too many of our seniors are facing.

The CJN: Finally, what is your message to Jewish voters across this country?

Trudeau: My pitch is primarily, an economic one. For 10 years, Mr. Harper has delivered the worst growth rate of any prime minister since the 1930s and the Great Depression. He has had the worst record on job creation of any prime minister since World War II. He has continued to give tax breaks and benefits to the wealthiest Canadians, while leaving middle-class Canadians to fall further behind. And that is the real change we are focusing on bringing.

Specifically for the Jewish community, we have to be very alert to a government that is choosing to use the politics of division and fear as blithely as Mr. Harper has been. Whether it's on the niqab issue, whether it's around citizenship issues, Mr. Harper never resists an opportunity to play with wedges and exacerbate fears instead of showing the kind of leadership that allays fears and brings people together.

And the primary example for me on this is that the Liberal party is of the opinion that it is a good thing in Canada that all major parties, and all potential prime ministers, support Israel. The fact that this prime minister has chosen to make support for Israel a domestic wedge issue is not good, either for Canada or for the Jewish community. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Mulcair: 'We have a plan to deal with radicalization'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

People are looking at us differently. They're very demanding in terms of asking us to show our numbers and how our plan differs from those of Mr. Harper and Mr. Trudeau.

But, as I say, the week started in southwestern Ontario with a tremendous reception. Yesterday, we were in B.C., and, again, things are going super-well for the NDP in British Columbia. And today, I'm in Edmonton. I had a great reception at the Assembly of First Nations. I couldn't be prouder of that.

The CJN: When it comes to domestic security, what will your party do to ensure the security of Canadians?

Mulcair: I'll give you a concrete example. We were in Surrey, B.C., a couple of weeks ago, where we're running a man named Garry Begg, who is a former very high-level RCMP officer, a superintendent in the area, and he represents our understanding that communities like Surrey are very concerned about policing issues.

In Surrey, in one three-month period in the spring, there were 30 shootings. So we've got a plan to bring in 2,500 police officers across the country. We have a plan, also, to start dealing with radicalization, which we know is a real source of concern. But there's nothing on deradicalization in Stephen Harper's Bill C51.

And I also think that we have to have a clear plan for combating anti-Semitism. And we know that we've had different attacks on synagogues in my hometown of Montreal over the years. This is something that I personally intend to see to.

The CJN: What is your view of the Iran deal? If you are elected prime minister, how would you go about trying to influence change in Tehran's behaviour? What is Canada's role to play on this issue?

Mulcair: I think we need to take a very strong stance that this deal has to be enforced rigorously. There's absolutely no room for mistake.

I know that Iran's nuclear ambitions pose a real and present danger, not only to regional peace and security but to global peace and security. I read about Iran's horrible anti-Semitic statements. I know who I'm dealing with.

But at the same time, the agreement reached by the P5 +1 (countries) does show that if you apply yourself and you believe in getting results, you can achieve that through diplomatic channels. So after decades of hostility, there's some hope that we can reign in nuclear ambitions in Iran.

> *I also think that we have to have a clear plan for combating anti-Semitism.*

But again, we have to take a very tough approach on enforcement.

The CJN: Where does the NDP stand on Israel, and the balance between security for the Jewish state and peace with the Palestinians?

Mulcair: I think that Canada can and should be playing a role. I think that a Canada that is respected on the world stage can play a more positive role, if asked to do so, in the region.

Israel and Palestine have to be two states that would live in peace and security, with established and negotiated borders. The NDP has for a long time called to work with our partners for peace in the Middle East, with a safe country for Israelis and a safe country for Palestinians.

We also know, as I've always said, that it has to be within a framework of international law and United Nations resolution.

The CJN: Where do you stand on the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement?

Mulcair: I think it's absurd, and I disagree with it. Our focus is achieving real progress in the peace process – lifting countries in this region up, not putting Israel down.

The CJN: Poverty is an important issue for the Jewish community. What would your government do to help alleviate poverty in Canada?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

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Last major Hadassah Bazaar being held in London Nov.1

RON STANG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The last major one-day Hadassah Bazaar in Canada will hold its final sale Nov. 1, a victim, like similar events elsewhere, of changing demographics and modern retailing trends.

London, Ont.'s Hadassah-WIZO Bazaar will end a 55-year run, during which it served as a focal point for breaking down barriers not just among people in the city's Jewish community, but among the wider London population as well.

"This crossed all lines," said founding chair Judy Goldberg.

Goldberg and other organizers weren't sure why London's event has outlasted other bazaars, including those in Kitchener and Toronto, which both closed over the past decade. Montreal and Vancouver also once had bazaars that raised millions of dollars for Jewish women's and children's causes – such as schools, daycares and hospitals – in Canada and Israel.

But the fact London is smaller, relatively tight knit, and somewhat removed from larger centres like Toronto helped created an event to which the entire community was drawn.

"Our customers weren't just Jewish customers," Goldberg said.

Goldberg, originally from Montreal, brought the Hadassah experience with her. In turn, the wider community learned about Jewish culture in many of its manifestations.

"We didn't have the bakeries that there are in Toronto and Montreal," she said. "This was novel. This was an education process as well, for not only our Jewish people, but for the entire community."

The event was so popular that even a bus strike didn't prevent people from showing up in droves. In its early years, the bazaar was something unique in a city that was less multicultural than it is today.

"In the middle of the night before the bazaar, we had a car go up to Toronto and get a 100-dozen bagels, because nobody knew what a bagel was in London," Goldberg laughed.

Organizers of the then-12-hour event even brought in big-name entertainers, such as CBC-TV's Juliette, a national star from the 1950s to the 1970s.

"Hadassah really put the Jewish community on the map with its bazaar," she said.

The event also had something of a small-town feel. One member, for example, had an apple orchard and donated 100 bushel baskets, which sold out. "We did a lot of homespun things. It dropped the barriers," she said.

Volunteer Paula Zaifman, pictured selling crafts in 2014, has worked at every bazaar since the event's inception.
LONDON HADASSAH WIZO PHOTO

While the fact this is the last bazaar makes her feel "sad," Goldberg was realistic about societal changes that have brought this about. They include the fact people can now buy used clothing at Goodwill and Value Village, as well as at pop-up stores, and that major department store have sales throughout the year.

"Everything in life changes," she said. "It fulfilled the goals that we had established, and then you have to move on."

Those staffing the event were also getting older, said volunteer recruiter Judy Silver. But she was happy to report that there is still one booth "that's managed completely by younger people, so that's exciting."

Silver also said newer sale items will be donated like they have been in the past, including Teva Naot footwear.

The bazaar was once so big that it was held at London's Western Fair Grounds. It later moved to Northland Mall, and finally about 10 years ago, it shrunk in size and found a home at the London Jewish Community Centre.

"It's on a much smaller scale than it was," said Michelle Bottner, president of the local Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) council. Nevertheless, "it's a pretty big undertaking."

Bottner said the group used to have a donated warehouse where people could bring goods for sale months in advance of the bazaar.

But when Nov. 1 rolls around this year, there will still be plenty of sale items, along with a popular on site restaurant featuring latkes, blintzes, bagels with lox and cream cheese, and matzah ball soup.

The final bazaar doesn't necessarily mean the permanent end of a Hadassah event at this time of year. "It doesn't mean that we're not going to ever bring back some sort of incarnation of it," Bottner said. ■

Refurbished memorial draws 600 to Shoah event

Adria and Barrett Forberg, both 7 (foreground) and their brother Nathan, 10, stand before a wall paying tribute to the 1.5 million Jewish children murdered in the Holocaust. RON CSILLAG PHOTO

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Some 600 people gathered in Earl Bales Park Oct. 4 for the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem's annual Yizkor service and the unveiling of the society's vastly refurbished Holocaust memorial site.

An array of political figures and diplomatic representatives from 10 countries were in attendance for the moving service. Greetings on behalf of the federal government were brought by Finance Minister Joe Oliver, who repeated earlier pledges that the Conservatives have "zero tolerance" for anti-Semitism.

Holocaust survivor Thomas Hecht of Montreal recounted his rescue by Aristides de Sousa Mendes, a gentile who served as Portugal's wartime consul-general in Bordeaux, France and defied orders by issuing some 20,000 protective visas to Jewish refugees.

Today, de Sousa Mendes is designated as Righteous Among the Nations, one of 25,000 or so gentiles so recognized by Yad Vashem.

The service paid tribute not only to the Holocaust's victims, but also to partisans, Allied governments, ghetto fighters and the Righteous Among the Nations, who are represented by a wall that lists 50 nations from which the heroes originated, and their flags. The awards were handed out to the founders of the original memorial site and to the sponsors of the new features, who later unveiled those elements.

What began in 1991 as a towering, flame-topped bronze obelisk designed by sculptor Ernest Raab and some markers has spread out to a two-acre site that now holds eight curved commemorative walls, memorial gardens and several smaller pillars and monuments.

One of the central new additions is a memorial to David Smuschkowitz, a one-time partisan fighter who helped found the Canadian society. He died in 2011.

In all, the two-year fundraising campaign yielded some two dozen new features at the site.

The site "is a place where the community at large, educators and their students, and people of all faiths can come to remember the past, reflect on the legacy of the Holocaust, and recommit to a better future," remarked Fran Sonshine, national chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem.

"Today, more than ever, this site is of utmost importance to this community, to this city, and to this province. We hope that all educators who are in charge of teaching history to our children come to this site as part of their curriculum, so that no one can say that they were ignorant of the Holocaust and didn't know what Auschwitz was," Sonshine added.

Among the highlights is a wall in memory of the 1.5 million Jewish children murdered in the Shoah. It features the names of 365 children who perished, each of whose birthdates corresponds to one calendar day. A Canadian child celebrating a bar or bat mitzvah and a child who perished in the Holocaust can be "twinned" based on their common birthdates, as part of the Yad Vashem Twinning Program. ■

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Jewish men among thousands awaiting kidney donors

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Zac Zenith

Paul Jacobs

Zac Zenith, a Calgary mortgage broker, needs a kidney donor for a transplant.

Paul Jacobs of Toronto, who is known in the legal and business community, needs a live kidney donation.

Zenith and Jacobs are two of thousands of Canadians, many of them on dialysis, who require a kidney transplant.

When patients are diagnosed with kidney disease, their renal health-care team will help them navigate the process of potentially being put on a transplant list.

Zenith and his wife, Amber, have two children. He was diagnosed with an autoimmune chronic disease called focal segmental glomerulosclerosis (FSGS), and for the past 13 years, his kidney function has dropped significantly. He is now close to having kidney failure, he says.

"I am a hands-on father. My family is my life, and my wish is for their good health and happiness with me here to take care of them. I need a kidney donor.

"My blood type is O positive and any person with a Blood Type O can be a possible match. My wife, her siblings and cousins are not the same blood type or acceptable donors, as they are either older or younger with various health concerns."

He notes that a person can live a full and healthy life with one kidney. "A live donor would be a great gift, a mitzvah, a gift of life."

His mother, Helen Zenith, has taken the lead in finding a donor. She started a Facebook page because, she says, people are turning to social media.

Paul Jacobs' kidneys failed in 2010, as a result of polycystic kidney disease, which can be inherited. Direct family members are therefore not suitable donors. He went on dialysis three times a week.

Jacobs' wife, Nellie, volunteered to donate a kidney, and after going through months of testing, they determined that she was compatible and an excellent match.

"We thought we were home-free for the next 20 years," she says. "Unfortunately, two years ago, his transplanted kidney's function was compromised by a rare effect of a virus."

She notes that contrary to widespread belief, "there is no living kidney list in North America."

Helen Zenith told *The CJN* that initially it was confusing to figure out the system in Toronto. "You can only apply for a kidney from a deceased donor after you are on dialysis. Zac, who is not on dialysis although his kidney function has dropped significantly, has already done a work-up and he's been found to be transplant worthy, if a private donor can be found."

In Ontario, she said, when someone goes on dialysis, he or she is "automatically" added to the bottom of the list of recipients, who typically have to wait seven to 10 years.

Jacobs, the father of four children and eight grandchildren, says he prays to be able to continue his work and to enjoy the freedom to come and go.

Nellie Jacobs told *The CJN* that "it's time to create a living kidney registry. The outcome of living kidney donors is excellent. Our bodies are able to adjust and function quite well with only one kidney. I can attest to that.

"The well-being of the potential donor is never compromised for the sake of the recipient." ■

To contact Nellie Jacobs, email, takethe-leapnow@yahoo.ca. You can reach Helen Zenith at 403-803-4077 or zaczenith@shaw.ca.

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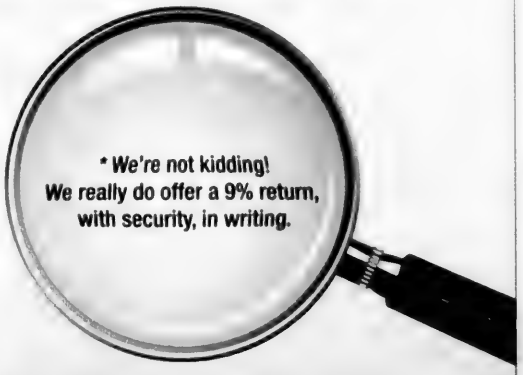

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New JNF Winnipeg head has fundraising track record

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Ariel Karabelnicoff, newly appointed executive director of the Jewish National Fund's Winnipeg office, sees life as a journey, and that journey to his present position has taken him full circle.

Karabelnicoff has been working for the JNF and Israel – in one capacity or another – for almost his entire life. "I started raising money for the JNF in my home town in Argentina when I was six years old, asking people to contribute to the JNF on an individual basis" he says, recalling the ubiquitous blue box in his home.

Karabelnicoff grew up in La Plata, in Buenos Aires province. In 1988, he made aliyah, and in Israel he met his wife, Gabby, who had also made aliyah from Argentina. He studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, served in the IDF, and worked in government as an aide to Israeli cabinet minister Shlomo Ben Ami. Karabelnicoff and his family came to Winnipeg in 2003.

Initially, he worked in the financial services industry, but, he says, almost from the beginning he volunteered with JNF where he and Rami Kleinmann, the shaliach here, became close friends. Kleinmann left Winnipeg and the JNF in 2007 for Toronto where he is currently the president and CEO of Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University.

Ariel Karabelnicoff MYRON LOVE PHOTO

> *This is an opportunity to represent one of the largest organizations in world Jewry.*

In 2006, Karabelnicoff was hired as the executive director of the State of Israel Bonds office in Winnipeg, and in that capacity, he shared an office with the JNF.

After compiling a strong record in Israel Bond sales, he moved on, two years ago, to serve as the new executive director of the Winnipeg chapter of the Canadian Associates of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Over the past two years, he and his board hosted a number of programs that greatly raised the BGU profile locally.

As for moving back to JNF he says, "I feel privileged to have been chosen for such an important position.

"This is an opportunity to represent one of the largest organizations in world Jewry. I can continue working for Israel on a much larger scale. JNF has partnerships with so many important institutions throughout Israel."

JNF is unique, he says. "As the caretaker of the land of Israel, JNF touches every corner of the [country.]"

Karla Berbrayer, JNF president for Manitoba and Saskatchewan, says that Karabelnicoff "impressed the board members a great deal with his knowledge about JNF and Israel. He came across as a candidate with strong leadership skills. We are very excited and happy that Ariel is taking the helm here."

Karabelnicoff says that he is looking forward to building on the excellent level of achievement left him by his predecessor. "For me, this is not a job. It is a calling. I see myself in this role as an enabler, helping people – Jewish and non-Jewish – to connect with the land of Israel and the people of Israel. The bar is high. I hope that I can measure up." ■

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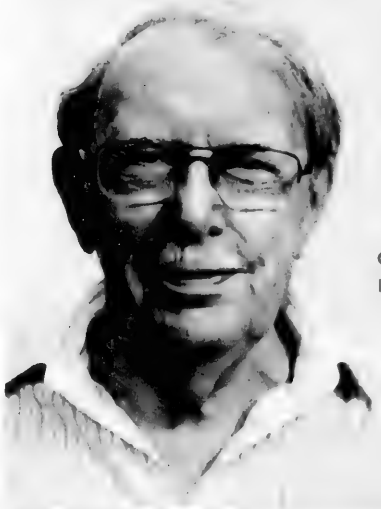

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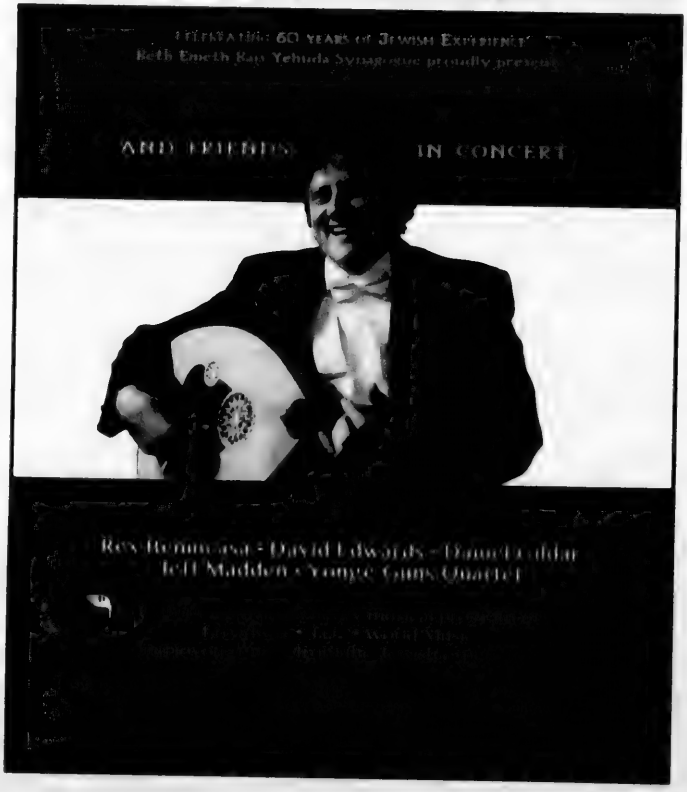

Authors probe motives of philanthropic big givers

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

In fundraising they say 20 per cent of the people contribute 80 per cent of the money, and when it comes to big projects, that can amount to a lot of loonies.

Multimillion-dollar gifts have helped hospitals erect new wings, build opera houses, open specialized schools in universities, and in the case of the Jewish community, construct a network of agencies that boggles the mind, as well as a sprawling new campus in what was vacant land not that long ago.

So what motivates the super-rich to write cheques in the millions of dollars for projects such as these and to select among the 86,000 non-profit organizations in Canada?

Chuck English and Mo Lidsky set out to find the answer. A few weeks ago, they released the results of their research in the form of a new book titled, *The Philanthropic Mind*. The book features interviews with close to 50 big givers, each of whom made at least one donation greater than $1 million.

Many of the profiled philanthropists are familiar to the Jewish community. Some have headed UJA fundraising campaigns. Others have given to Jewish causes and those in Israel. Among the notables in *The Philanthropic Mind* are Joe Lebovic, Seymour Schulich, Izzy Sharp, Lawrence Bloomberg, Linda Frum and Howard Sokolowski, Gerry Schwartz and Heather Reisman, as well as Ed and Fran Sonshine.

About 60 per cent of the philanthropists cited in the book are Jewish, leading to the inevitable question: what is it that makes Jews particularly generous?

Well, "among Jews, there is a strong tradition, a strong heritage for the idea of tzedakah," said English, a consultant to businesses and not-for-profits. "Almost all the people we talked to said their parents and grandparents shaped their giving inclination."

The principle of tithing is part of the Jewish heritage, even among assimilated Jews, added Lidsky, a principal at Prime Quadrant, an investment research and consulting firm. In addition, over the years Jews have had to create their own communal infrastructure, "and that has lots of pieces. Jews have lots of organizations" with plenty of boards to run and projects to conceive, fund and build.

Referring to the plethora of "Friends" groups in the Jewish community, which support charities in Canada and Israel, Lidsky said you don't find that kind of extensive infrastructure in other Canadian communities. "It's so central to who we are and what we do."

Mo Lidsky, left, and Chuck English

Of course, Jews are not the only people with a sense of community responsibility who are profiled in *The Philanthropic Mind*. Others include Tony Comper, Donald Johnson and Richard Ivey.

English said for both Jews and non-Jews, "their parents established for them an example of giving. In many cases, it was direct service giving," such as doing volunteer work. "Most came from families that were philanthropic in spirit. Clearly that was something that was ingrained. Many felt fortunate to enjoy their success and felt an obligation to give back," he said.

"Philanthropists are almost wired to give," Lidsky said. "They want to give, so much so, that if people penetrated the barriers they need to put up, they'd have a hard time saying no." If you get the meeting, he added, "you're 90 per cent there."

Over the course of their research, English and Lidsky uncovered several findings that would interest staff at not-for-profits, fundraisers and other potential purchasers of the book. One focuses on the changing demographic of big givers. Second generation philanthropists increasingly are demanding accountability in how the money is spent. They don't simply want to write a cheque. They want to see results.

"The sense we got is that second generation philanthropists tend to be more selective." Many have inherited the wealth and feel they are its stewards. Plus, when they attach their name to a cause, they want to be sure the money is well spent and the charity accomplishes its stated goals, Lidsky said.

There's even an important psychological benefit to giving away one's wealth. English found big givers "want to feel passionate about things and feel part of something."

Their research backed up that finding. The authors cite psychologists Netta Weinstein and Richard Ryan who found that giving energizes the giver when it's done with passion and joy. It provides them with "a sense of fulfilment and empowerment," the researchers found.

There's no similar psychological benefit when giving is done through a sense of duty or obligation. ■

Ottawa school adopts immersive Hebrew program

From left, Nachum Ganor and teachers Ruthie Lebovich and Noga Reiss

DIANE KOVEN
OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT

The Ottawa Jewish Community School (OJCS) has become the first school in Canada to implement the Ulpan-Or method, an innovative, technology-based, interactive and immersive way of rapidly teaching conversational Hebrew to students.

Developed in Israel 20 years ago, Ulpan-Or teaches Hebrew as a second language through what's called "rapid language acquisition." Taught in both physical classrooms and online, the method is designed to help students learn and speak Hebrew quickly, as well as build their confidence and love of the language.

The program is geared to grades 6 to 8, but the school has started using it in Grade 5, because educators felt students were ready for it.

"Using laptops and iPads, our students have access to online materials that include video and audio files, electronic flash cards, e-books and an interactive newspaper, which is published in Israel," said head of school Marlene Wolinsky. "This also gives us a connection to the news and events in Israel, helping our children form a connection to Israel."

Noga Reiss has been teaching Hebrew at OJCS for a quarter century, but eagerly adopted the new method. The school previously used a traditional textbook-based, vocabulary-centred way of teaching.

"The students just love the program," Reiss said. "It is all online, all accessible from both home and school."

Reiss said she's already seeing benefits.

"Students have various skill levels when it comes to learning a new language – some are visual learners while others are auditory learners. Ulpan-Or provides students with beginner lessons to the most advanced lessons," she said. "The progress is instant. My students were able to speak Hebrew on their first day of school."

A local philanthropist is helping to fund the initiative. "The opportunity arose through Barbara Crook. Based on her own experience with the program, which has been a fantastic learning experience for her, she wondered if OJCS would be interested in acquiring the program," Wolinsky said.

Crook has been studying Hebrew for a decade through Ulpan-Or, both on trips to Israel and by telephone and Skype. She was impressed by how quickly it lets people actually begin to speak Hebrew. "After the first lesson, starting with nothing, I was able to walk out and speak with people a few words in Hebrew," she said. "It wasn't a lot, just 'Hello, my name is,' but it was very empowering," she said.

OJCS enthusiastically accepted her offer to fund teacher training for the program. In August, Ulpan-Or vice-president Nachum Ganor, son of founders Orly and Yoel Ganor, travelled to Ottawa to train two of the school's Hebrew-language teachers.

"One of the things that Nachum helped us understand was the importance of surrounding our students with the Hebrew language and really immersing them with opportunities to use the language in conversational ways," Wolinsky said.

Part of the goal is to make learning Hebrew enjoyable. "We want it to be fun for students, and that's why we use technology, because this is their language, this is their mother tongue nowadays," Ganor said. "We want them to come to Israel and feel comfortable speaking Hebrew in the Israeli streets," he said. "Of course, it will also be an opening for them Judaically."

The students can relate easily to the material. "The students are learning words for everyday foods that we find in our grocery store... and they are encouraged to go out into the community and videotape themselves using the language in the grocery store. For example, two students will go to the store with an iPad and video themselves conversing about what they would be eating on Shabbat. Then they would replay the video in the classroom," Wolinsky said.

"We hope to be the school in Canada to provide information to other schools and perhaps to train other teachers and schools as we become more experienced with the program," Wolinsky said. "We see a tremendous leadership opportunity." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 15, 2015

YU simchah squad enhances chagim at Halifax shul

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT, HALIFAX

The enthusiasm was electric, just as promised.

When Hisoriri was booked to come to Halifax's Beth Israel Synagogue, the volunteer group of young people from New York – all with Yeshiva University and Orthodox backgrounds – guaranteed a lively Simchat Torah service.

Singing, dancing and general celebration filled the shul as the four young adults brought their brand of excitement and passion to the services.

"Many people told me it was the best Simchat Torah they had ever experienced," said Rabbi Amram Maccabi of the soon-to-be 125-year-old congregation.

"It was certainly what I expected when I booked them and more. They made a connection with our congregants, many of whom asked for their contact information so they could stay in touch."

Dov Winston, a 24-year-old rabbinical studies student at YU, formed the group about six months ago. He has 25 consistently available volunteers, from a roster of 70, most of whom live in the Washington Heights area of New York City.

From left are Tzvi Zuckier, Dov Winston, Michael Yudien, Julia Siegel and Rabbi Amram Maccabi
JOEL JACOBSON PHOTO

Ranging in age from 18 to 26, the young men and women are university graduates and friends looking for things to do to help Orthodox shuls enhance their programs.

"We are passionate about Judaism. We care about Judaism," said Winston, who was raised in Long Island's Cedarhurst area. "We try to make the events and services we attend unforgettable with our dancing and singing, and our enthusiasm."

Each of the four who visited Halifax either led services, did Torah layning or presented a dvar Torah during Shmini Atzeret or Simchat Torah.

Julia Siegel, a 24-year-old from Kansas City, Mo., is a graduate student in experiential Jewish education. "Dov posted the opportunity to come to Halifax, and I enjoy going to new communities, bringing extra energy to them. Everyone here was warm and friendly."

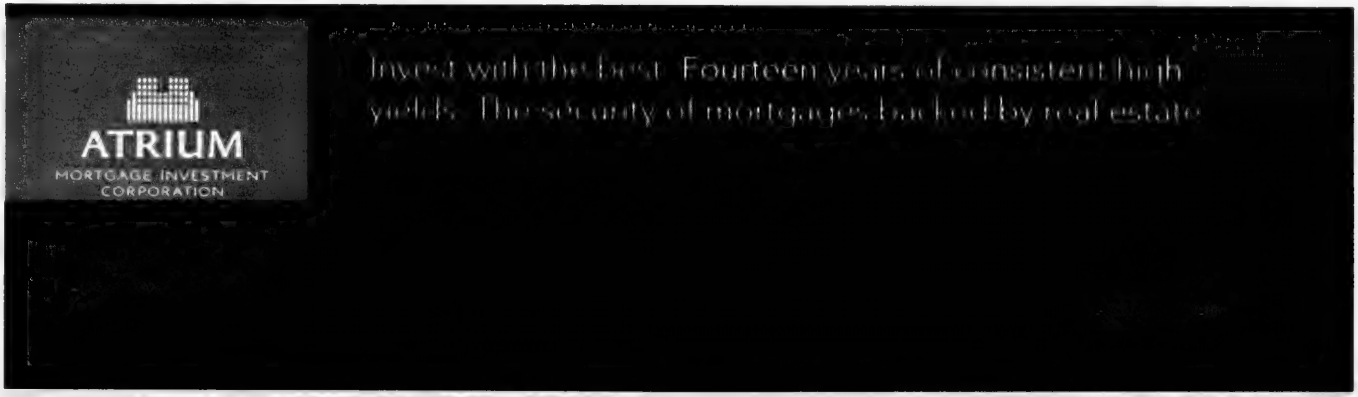
Zvi Zuckier, 24, from Teaneck N.J., is studying social work. Michael Yudien, 25, of Boca Raton, Fla., works for United Hatzalah in New York, supporting life-saving efforts in Israel.

Synagogue members assist with travel expenses and accommodation, and host the visitors for meals, enabling Hisoriri to provide volunteer service.

Winston, came up with the group's name, Hisoriri, Hebrew for "to awaken," while studying at a yeshiva in Jerusalem five years ago. "I discovered it wasn't that hard to change, without doing that much work, but by just devoting yourself to it. The key is always asking God for help. I started doing this outreach work, then and formed Hisoriri last April," he said.

"It's not just a one-off for communities, but a chance to form relationships that will bring us back again and again. For example, we go to a shul in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., (near Scranton) for three or four Shabbatons a year."

He added, "I love people, Jewish people in particular. If I can connect Jews, how can I not do that? We're prepared to go to any Orthodox community. Just visit our website at hisoriri.com." ■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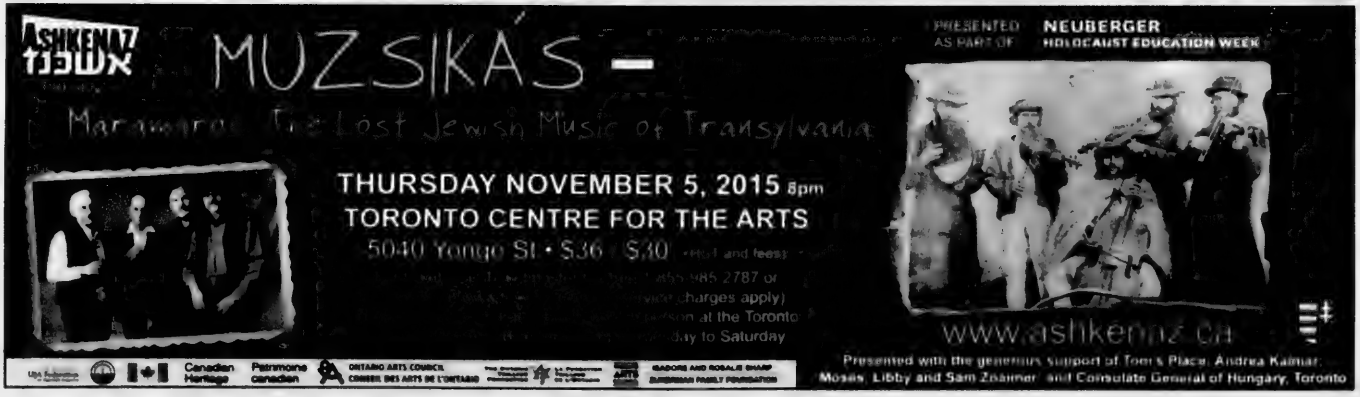
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SeeJN | Simchat Torah up close and personal

DAVID BALE PHOTO

At Leo Baeck Day School's north campus, Rabbi Noam Katz – the school's dean of Jewish living – makes a point by highlighting a parshah on a fully unrolled Torah scroll. Students held the scroll on their laps for an up close learning experience as part of the celebration of Simchat Torah.

Community gathers to mourn slain Israeli

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Hundreds mourned with the Benitah family outside their Côte St. Luc home.

At the conclusion of Sukkot, several hundred people gathered on the street outside the Côte St. Luc home of the family of an Israeli murdered three days earlier by a Palestinian in Jerusalem.

Natan Benitah, a brother of the slain Aharon Benitah, 21, lives in Montreal. Their parents were visiting here after the birth of a child to Natan and his wife, Joy Elhaddad, a native of Montreal.

Rabbi Reuben Poupko, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aaron where Benitah davens, said the evening prayer was recited outside the home and then songs of mourning were sung.

It was in stark contrast to the usual celebration following Simchat Torah.

Israeli Consul General Ziv Nevo Kulman then drove the two couples to the airport where they left for Israel.

"Aharon's father spoke to the gathering, expressing his gratitude to the community for its support over these difficult days, as well as his faith in God and the destiny of the Jewish People," said Rabbi Poupko, who had spent several hours in private with the family as well. "They are overwhelmed with grief," he said.

Privately, he said the family was "distressed by some of the media coverage of the murder, almost legitimizing it by referring to Aharon as a settler and reporting that the Palestinian was shot [by police] after the Israeli 'died.'"

Benitah, a resident of a West Bank settlement, was stabbed to death in the Old City near the Lion's Gate on the evening of Oct. 3, just after the end of Shabbat.

Rabbi Poupko said Nevo Kulman immediately joined the family at the conclusion of Shabbat here several hours later. ■

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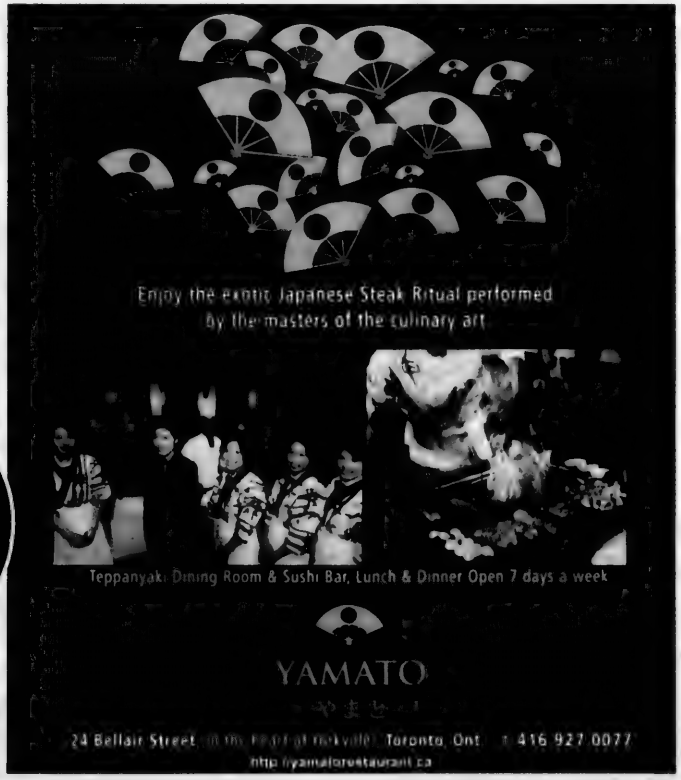
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Winnipeg's day school enrolment looking up this year

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

The outlook for Winnipeg's Gray Academy of Jewish Education is looking brighter this year after a significant drop in student numbers over the past few years.

Much of the decline, then-head of school and CEO Rory Paul said in an interview last year, was due to a number of families leaving the city to pursue career opportunities elsewhere.

This year, new head of school and CEO Lori Binder, who succeeded Paul last June at Winnipeg's main kindergarten-to-Grade 12 Jewish day school, said student numbers are about the same as last year – slightly over 500. More significantly, she added, the school's retention rate is 99 per cent.

"That is our highest retention rate in several years," she said. "The fact that our numbers are virtually identical to last year's speaks well to the community's enthusiasm for Jewish education and what we do here at Gray Academy. Many new families are choosing our school and we have many students who are children of alumni."

Binder said the 2015-16 Grade 12 class numbers 29 students, compared to just 20 graduates last spring. There are also 48 students in the Grade 11 class.

At the other end of the spectrum, 35 students are enrolled in two kindergarten classes, with 22 in junior kindergarten.

Last year, Paul noted that the smaller numbers – 60 at the time – enrolled in the junior kindergarten and kindergarten classes are due to the recession in 2008 and 2009. "It seems that fewer babies were born in those years," he said in 2014. "Kindergarten numbers are down throughout the city. More recently, there seems to have been a resurgence of births in the community."

There are other positives for the school: its international program, now in its sixth year, is continuing to grow.

"We have six students this year in our high school from Mexico, Brazil and, for the first time, the United States, and we are expecting another couple of students in the second semester," Binder said. "We also have a student from Vancouver."

The out-of-town students come to Winnipeg for a year to study and live with host families.

Lori Binder

She added that two representatives of the U.S.-based EdJEWcon organization are coming to visit the school with an eye to designating Gray Academy as one of its lead schools in Canada. EdJEWcon's stated mission is to "help Jewish day schools reach their potential as exemplars of 21st-century learning in action."

"We have a great new leadership team and board," Binder said. "We are proud to be a leading Jewish day school in North America. Our goal is to work toward ensuring that Gray Academy remains a top-rated Jewish day school for years to come and ensure the continuity of our community for many generations."

Meanwhile, the Hebrew bilingual program at Brock Corydon Public School is continuing its upward trajectory. There are more than 200 students this year, compared to 173 last year. The previous high for enrolment was 180 five years ago. Enrolment had dropped as low as 122 in the 2012-2013 school year.

"We have 30 children in kindergarten this year," said Brock Corydon principal Ara Morris. "And we are still registering new students."

The program, the only public school Hebrew bilingual program in North America, provides half-day Hebrew instruction and half-day regular classes. The school also has an enrolment of 100 non-Jewish students. The two groups come together for joint celebrations of Jewish and Christian holidays and other school activities. ■

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Jews' presence in Jamaica traced to Spanish Inquisition

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Wilfred Lindo

The cruise ships don't stop on the south side of Jamaica much anymore. They're more likely to make port on the north shore, where the beaches are quite spectacular.

But that routing change has deprived many of the cruise passengers from visiting the Shaare Shalom Synagogue in Kingston, the second oldest Jewish house of worship in the Caribbean and arguably, the most beautiful.

At least that's the view of Wilfred Lindo, a native of Jamaica who has lived in Toronto since 1966. The Duke Street synagogue features the white sand floors that are distinctive among the old Caribbean synagogues, as well as a very attractive painted white exterior. There was a time when the shul was filled with visitors disembarking from cruise ships, who came to see the historic house of worship, pray there and even be honoured with aliyahs, Lindo said.

They would also come away with a better sense of the Jewish community's history, which can be traced back all the way to the Spanish Inquisition. Lindo, who traces his family's roots in Jamaica to the 1500s, will present his personal perspective on being Jamaican and Jewish at a public lecture at Darchei Noam Synagogue on Sunday, Oct. 18. His presentation is part 1 of a three-part series looking at "The Caribbean Jewish experience." Part 2 is scheduled for Nov. 22 and will examine Guatemala's newest Jewish community, while part 3 will take place on Jan. 17, 2016 and will discuss the renewal of Jewish life in Suriname.

As for Lindo's family, it was the Spanish Inquisition that prompted them to leave their homes in the Iberian Peninsula and seek better lives elsewhere. Lindo's father's family originally hailed from Spain, while his mother's side – the Da Costa family – came from Portugal.

Forced to flee the Inquisition, they lived as conversos (Christian converts) in public, but practised Judaism in private.

They lived that way for generations, until the day in 1655 when the English conquered the island from Spain, and ceased persecuting Jews.

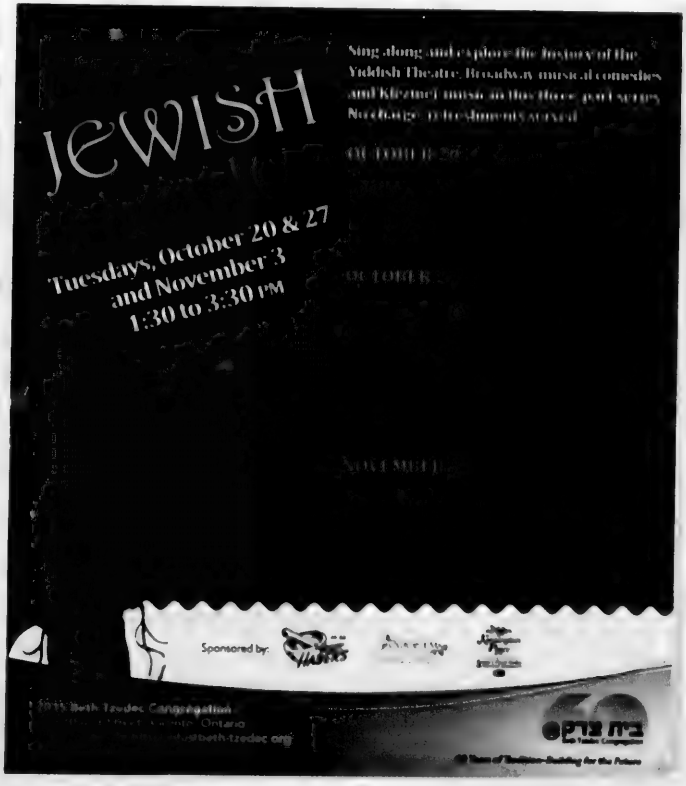
From that time, the Jewish community grew, prospered and became an important part of island life. It could boast a member of Parliament and prominent individuals in all sorts of fields, from business, to accounting, law and more, said Lindo.

But over time, Jamaican Jews departed for more opportunities elsewhere. From a peak of around 3,000 in its heyday, the community has dwindled to only about 250 today. Jamaican Jews can now be found around the world, from Australia, to Mexico, to the United States to Canada.

Lindo made the move to Toronto in 1966 and over time, sponsored his seven other brothers to emigrate here as well. He still has family on the island and visits there every few years. Last year, he helped raise funds to upgrade the synagogue, the last remaining place of worship on an island that at its peak could boast eight such buildings.

Lindo, who serves as president of the Pride of Israel Synagogue benefit society, said that while the number of Jews on the island has decreased, in part because of intermarriage, he's noticed an interesting phenomenon developing in recent years.

"A lot of native people have discovered their roots and are coming back to Judaism," he said. ■



Israel not the only issue in the campaign

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

He has maintained repeatedly that his party and leader Justin Trudeau are as supportive of Israel as the Conservatives, and that he, personally, takes a back seat to no one on the Jewish state. But Housefather also recognizes that this issue is not uppermost in the minds of most Mount Royal residents and that even many Jews do not want to be treated as a one-issue constituency.

On Sept. 24, Stephen Bronfman, a powerful name in the Jewish community, affirmed at a Housefather event: "I brought Justin [Trudeau] with me to Israel seven years ago. Israel has his support and understanding."

Housefather responded: "For anyone who questions the Liberal party's commitment to and support for the State of Israel, the Bronfman name stands tall. The Bronfman family has played a leadership role in the Canadian Jewish community for generations."

Libman asks: "How many times does the Jewish community want to be fooled by the Liberal party double-speak when it comes to Israel?... Justin Trudeau would have us believe the Liberal party [is] the same [as Harper], when all the evidence says otherwise."

Housefather has also received high-profile endorsements from local politicians, including longtime Snowdon city councillor Marvin Rotrand, borough mayor Russell Copeman, Town of Mount Royal Mayor Philippe Roy and Montreal West Mayor Beny Masella, among others.

Trudeau, whose father, Pierre Elliott, represented Mount Royal from 1965-84, had not at time of writing visited the riding.

There have been reports of over-zealous Libman volunteers trying to shame Jews into voting Conservative, which Libman has apologized for.

Declared Liberal supporter Mitchell Kujavsky says he resents the Conservatives dealing in the "politics of fear" on Israel. "The sheer amount of misinformation and false rumours circulating through emails and word-of-mouth has been alarming... From stolen and defaced signs to door-to-door volunteers accusing their fellow Jews of being anti-Semites, it has been nothing short of concerning and, at times, disturbing."

Libman campaign worker Thelma Shapiro said, "Both sides have pointed fingers at each other about misbehaviour, with no conclusive proof on either side."

During the campaign's final days, Shapiro said, the Mount Royal Tories are avoiding going "negative" and attacking opponents.

"The parties' position on Israel has been in the spotlight, but we are stepping back and looking at the total picture, the many issues of concern in the riding."

Libman and Housefather have similar backgrounds. Both are graduates of Herzliah High School, got their start in public life at an early age, were leaders in the anglophone rights movement (Housefather was president of Alliance Quebec), were municipal officials, and are at ease before crowds.

They have different personas, though. While both are thoughtful and articulate, Libman projects a sober, formal image next to Housefather's sunny congeniality.

Just how divided Jewish voters in Mount Royal remain, even within families, is epitomized by Dida Berku and Jack Kincler, a couple married for 36 years. He is a staunch Conservative; she is for the Liberals.

"I love Anthony, he's a wonderful person... Whoever is elected is not going to make a huge difference at the local level, our lives are not going to change much," said Kincler, a businessman and chair of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research [which takes no side in the election.]

"The major issue for me is Israel, and Harper is definitely been the best friend for Israel. We owe him a debt of gratitude."

Berku, a Côte St. Luc city councillor and lawyer, said, "I think Canada has a good record on Israel, whether it has been a Liberal or Conservative government."

Former Progressive Conservative cabinet minister Gerry Weiner, left, gave a boost to Robert Libman.

While all three major candidates have merit, she said Housefather is "an excellent leader, he builds consensus, he's very responsive to the needs of his constituents."

In other ridings, Jews may not have the demographic weight to make a difference in the outcome.

Two female Sephardi candidates, however, appear to be having an impact. Liberal Rachel Bendayan in Outremont was within less than 10 points of NDP Leader Tom Mulcair (35.1 vs 44.2 per cent) and Conservative Valérie Assouline in Pierrefonds-Dollard was slightly ahead of the NDP incumbent Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe, but well behind Liberal Frank Baylis at close to 45 per cent, according to ThreeHundredEight.com on Oct. 7. A third Sephardi woman, Conservative Pascale Déry, is running in semi-rural Drummond, northeast of Montreal. ■

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Mulcair: Both my wife's parents survived the Holocaust

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

Mulcair: The values of social democratic NDP are the values of the Jewish community – it's a community that always comes together, that will fight hard to make sure that seniors don't live in poverty.

So, with regards to our seniors, the NDP has a clear plan to lift seniors out of poverty. We have several hundred thousand seniors living in real poverty in Canada. We have a plan to put $400 million a year more into what's called the Guaranteed Income Supplement, to help them.

We've also got a very large commitment to get affordable, decent housing. It's almost always women who wind up in those situations of poverty, and we've got to understand that as well.

> *The party I have the honour of leading connects a great deal with the Jewish community on the level of values.*

The CJN: Finally, what is your message to Jewish voters across this country?

Mulcair: My message is that I'm the only leader in this campaign who has a strong family connection to the Jewish community. Both of my wife's parents survived the Holocaust. She has family in Israel.

For me, this is not just a theoretical issue. It's a very personal one.

I also know that the party I have the honour of leading connects a great deal with the Jewish community on the level of values. Taking care of others – those are fundamental values that I've always encountered in the Jewish community. And giving to others – generosity. That's the same type of approach that the NDP has always taken.

I was just given an example this week where the Jewish community has been working very hard to help bring in Syrian refugees from Jordan. I think that's one of the most beautiful and telling Canadian stories I've heard in a long time. That's the Canada that I know exists.

I want a Canada where we respect our democratic institutions at home, and where our international reputation is respected abroad. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

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Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) deeply mourns the passing of Honorary National President

Naomi Frankenburg z"l

Naomi was involved with CHW for over 40 years, where she held a multitude of leadership positions at local, regional, and national levels. She was elected National President in 1987 -the first from Vancouver- and also had the distinction of being the first President to be installed in Israel

Naomi leaves behind a legacy of philanthropy and commitment to the Jewish community: in her home of Vancouver, throughout Canada, and in Israel.

May her memory be for a blessing.

Donations in memory of Naomi Frankenburg should be directed to Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) Toronto or Vancouver Office at:

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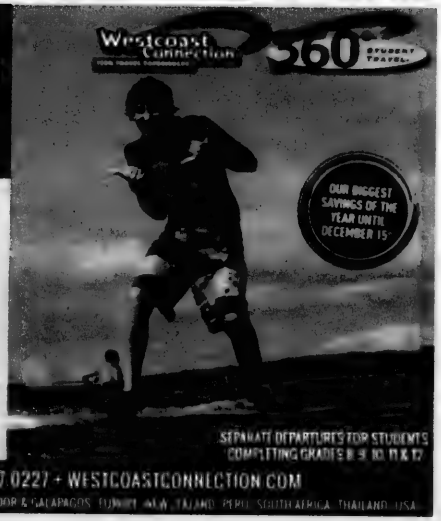

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Bibi's message: Trust me and we'll beat this terror war too

DAVID HOROVITZ
JERUSALEM

Amid a new terror phase, marked by a surge over recent days in what might be described as Palestinian "suicide stabbings" – relentless attacks by lone terrorists, across Israel and in the West Bank – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened a press conference on Oct. 8 to try to reassure an increasingly worried public.

He didn't announce a raft of new measures, but he and his security chiefs set out several central themes that served to underline that Israel is again on something akin to a war footing:

1. This is part of an endless battle against those who want to kill us: Israel has been fighting terrorism since "the start of the Zionist enterprise," Netanyahu said early in his press conference. Fighting it, and beating it. Today we're tackling "terrorists who have been incited and are filled with hatred." And Israel, he promised, will prevail in this phase of the ongoing struggle too. (Half of the hundreds of Palestinians arrested as terror suspects in recent weeks are minors, Internal Security Minister Gilad Erdan said a little later – hundreds of young minds incited to violence.)

2. I'm the best man for the job: simply by bringing together a kind of war council – addressing the public along with two key ministers and two security chiefs – Netanyahu was underlining that this is, if not a war, another serious and likely protracted battle. He hadn't convened this kind of public forum since last summer's war against Hamas in Gaza. And the message he hammered home was that his "team" could be trusted to beat the terrorists. And that his political opponents – making their irresponsible declarations from right and left – could not.

3. Israelis are a brave, resilient people: Netanyahu took pains to praise the "acts of heroism" by soldiers, cops and "ordinary citizens" who have intervened to thwart and halt several attacks in recent days. It's a lousy neighbourhood, he acknowledged. "We live in the Middle East," he noted dryly, "and the flames of extremism reach us too." But he was "proud" to be part of a nation of such courage and determination.

Benjamin Netanyahu speaks as he holds a joint press conference, Oct. 8, at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem regarding the recent wave of terror in Israel.
YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

> *We live in the Middle East ... and the flames of extremism reach us too.*

4. Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is part of the problem, but could also be part of the solution: Hamas, Abbas, the Palestinian Authority and Israel's own Islamic Movement have all been cynically "inciting" terrorism by disseminating the lie that Israel intends to change the status quo on the Temple Mount, the prime minister charged. He took pains to stress that this is not the case – in other words, that he has no intention of permitting Jewish prayer at the site, or widening Jewish access. In order to try to calm the situation at the mount, he pointed out, he has now even banned Knesset members – Jew and Muslim – from visiting. He was also careful not to place Abbas completely in the enemy camp. He hoped, he said, that he saw the beginning of a change in Abbas' statements and actions in recent days, although he wasn't sure. And he was as ready as ever, he insisted, to resume negotiations – without preconditions but also, obviously, without relinquishing key Israeli interests. He indicated, tellingly, that were the situation to spiral further out of control in the territories, the PA could find itself swept away by the wave of violent extremism.

5. This is not the same terror war as 15 years ago: Netanyahu and especially Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon were determined to project that this is currently a less devastating incarnation of the terror war than the second intifada. Ya'alon claimed that "Israel has been on the offensive" in the West Bank ever since Operation Defensive Shield in 2002, when the infrastructure behind the onslaught of suicide bombers was smashed, and that today's use of knives, stones and petrol bombs was a consequence of terrorists being unable to orchestrate attempts at wider killings. If necessary, the IDF would use "crushing" force, the defence minister said. But as things stood, what was needed was ongoing good intelligence, smaller-scale actions by the security forces, and a great deal of public awareness.

6. Israelis had better not take the law into their own hands: the acting police chief Bentzi Sau issued the starkest warning to Israelis not to start attacking Palestinians or Israeli Arabs in revenge. Several times in the past two days, Israeli civilians not only helped thwart stabbings, but also then protected the disarmed assailants from the wrath of other civilians until the police arrived.

7. Security takes precedence over settlements: It was "common sense," said Netanyahu, for him not to risk alienating parts of the international community by ordering new settlement building, as many of his right-wing coalition colleagues have demanded. He was determined, he said, to maintain wide outside backing for measures that have included sending troops into PA-controlled cities and "sharpening" open fire orders. Nobody needed to teach him lessons about the value of settlements, he declared, but his prime obligation was to the security of Israel's citizens. "Common sense" dictated the pragmatic course, he repeated. Common sense or not, this marked a departure from some past confrontations, when Netanyahu has responded to terror attacks by approving new settlement homes.

8. A wider coalition, with pleasure: asked about a larger government, perhaps including the centre-left Zionist Union, Netanyahu was all open arms. The terrorists don't distinguish between left- and right-wing Israelis, and lots of the arguments that divide mainstream politicians are pointless, he asserted. He's the man in charge, Netanyahu made abundantly clear, but "I want a wide coalition, and a unified people." ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

OPINION

Good friends and causes

Sagi Melamed

I recently received the following from my son Guy, and share it as is with you, my CJN readers:

A spacious house on the shores of a clear, blue lake. Azure sky above. Mountains and forest all around. What more could one dream about?

A few months ago, after 18 demanding months of physical and mental exertion which included tests and challenges, sleepless nights, growth and maturation, "Ron" (a pseudonym) and I finally completed our training course for an IDF unit.

Ron is a "lone soldier" in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), which means he came to Israel from the Diaspora to join the IDF. After the course's graduation ceremony, Ron received permission from our commanders to visit his family in Canada, to rest a little and enjoy time with family and friends.

One hot, humid morning after Ron returned to Israel, I sat next to him during morning prayers. Ahead of us was a long, arduous day of training. Ron finished folding his tfillin and put them away, then stretched and gave a heavy sigh.

"Oh man, Achi (Bro)!" he said in his non-Israeli accent. "You have no idea how much fun I had! I almost forgot how much fun it is to jet-ski at our summer cottage. Just forgetting everything, water and wind in my face. Seeing all my childhood friends. Now they're all in college, having a crazy time. Parties with no responsibilities. Good times."

The key word for meaningful army service and volunteer work is "giving." The primary measure of people's actions is how much they are willing to give of themselves and their resources. But not all people are equal, in their ability to give, and/or in the effort they need to make. So a wealthy man who donates 10,000 shekels does not give more of himself than a youngster who donates 500 shekels from his bar mitzvah gifts.

> *It is not easy for Israeli soldiers to fully appreciate and understand the challenges of the lone soldier*

Last week Ron left the base for a happy event. His younger sister came to Israel and joined the army. She was following in the footsteps of Ron and Ron's younger brother, who is also a lone soldier. Their father flew to Israel from Canada especially for the occasion, and the three siblings and their proud father all celebrated together.

It is not clear or easy for Israeli soldiers to fully appreciate and understand the challenges of the lone soldier. In addition to adapting to a foreign language, a different culture and a different weather, when he goes "home" on weekend leave, Ron's mother does not welcome him at the door with a loving hug and help him remove the heavy bag of dirty laundry from his shoulders. He does his own laundry (despite our offers to take his laundry home with us). He eats his Shabbat meals with host families, or sometimes, with friends. And prepares himself alone for the next week.

A rabbi at Yeshivat Ma'ale Gilboa where I studied says: "There is nothing more Jewish than an audible sigh." He claimed it is a quintessential Jewish act of great significance.

I finished putting away my own tfillin and heard Ron's sigh. I put an encouraging hand on his shoulder and said: "Ron, you already know that the reason you came to Israel, the Jewish homeland, was not for the college parties and beer or for wide lakes and evergreen forests. You came for the good friends who stand with you through hard times, and for causes worth the sacrifice. And those things Israel knows how to give." — GUY MELAMED

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Israeli PM vows to return security to Israel

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last week that the government would take steps to combat incitement against Israelis by the Palestinian Authority, Islamic Movement and even other countries in the region as the country is in the grips of "a wave of terrorism."

At a press conference on Oct. 8, convened after four stabbing attacks in Israel, Netanyahu lauded the soldiers, police officers and citizens of Israel for their bravery, and said the government would "return security" to the country.

"In recent days and hours I have seen displays of heroism by soldiers, police and – no less – by civilians. I see this in Jerusalem, Kiryat Gat, Hebron, Petah Tikva, Tel Aviv and now in Afula," he said. "Israelis are acting with bravery, composure and determination to neutralize and eliminate the terrorists. This requires extraordinary courage and resourcefulness and we are proud to be part of a country that has such citizens."

In a show of unity and force, Netanyahu was accompanied by Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon, Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan, IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot, and acting Israel Police chief Bentzi Sau.

Dozens of Palestinian protesters burn tires and throw stones at Israeli troops during clashes near the West Bank city of Ramallah and elsewhere on Oct. 8. Israeli forces responded with tear gas and stun grenades. FLASH90 PHOTO

"We are in the midst of a wave of terrorism with knives, firebombs, rocks and even live fire. While these acts are mostly unorganized, they are all the result of wild and mendacious incitement by Hamas, the Palestinian Authority, several countries in the region and – no less and frequently much more – the Islamic Movement in Israel, which is igniting the ground with lies regarding our policy on the Temple Mount and the purported changes that we want to make to the status quo," the prime minister continued. "This is an absolute lie. We are also taking action against the inciters and the attackers."

The head of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement, Sheikh Raed Salah, said earlier in the day that his organization intends to respond to what he called "continued Israeli escalation" against the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

"We have a package of plans ready to be unleashed immediately," Salah said.

Netanyahu said the government would adopt "aggressive steps" to combat the Islamic Movement's incitement.

Taking the podium next, Ya'alon also insisted that Israel had no intention of changing the status quo on the Temple Mount.

Erdan, meanwhile, said Israel would be "increasing the minimum sentences even for stone and Molotov cocktail throwing, so that they [the perpetrators] know they will sit for a long time in prison."

Hinting at a desire to bring Zionist Union into his government, Netanyahu said it was easy for opposition leader Isaac Herzog to criticize as he was not in the ruling coalition.

"Maybe, if I weren't in power, I would hear hints," he said.

But the prime minister suggested he'd be open to a coalition government with the 24-seat Zionist Union, which would significantly expand his narrow 61-seat government. "At this time we need to join forces, we need a broad national front," he said.

Herzog said in response that Netanyahu "runs from speech to speech but words don't stop terrorism and don't serve security." ■

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U.S. finds itself in Israel's shoes after hospital bombing

BEN SALES
JTA, JERUSALEM

One of the low points of last year's Gaza war was Israel's Aug. 3 strike outside a United Nations school in the city of Rafah. The strike, meant to hit a military target according to the Israel Defence Forces, killed at least 10 people and injured dozens. It was the latest in a string of Israeli bombs to hit UN facilities.

As news of the bombing spread, the UN issued a swift condemnation, calling it a "moral outrage and criminal act." So did the United States, condemning the shelling and admonishing Israel to adhere to higher standards of warfare.

"The United States is appalled by today's disgraceful shelling outside an UNRWA school in Rafah sheltering some 3,000 displaced persons, in which 10 more Palestinian civilians were tragically killed," State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki said in a statement on the same day as the Rafah strike. "We once again stress that Israel must do more to meet its own standards and avoid civilian casualties."

Now, the United States finds itself in Israel's place, fending off criticism after its forces bombed a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Afghanistan Saturday, killing 22. The UN issued a harsh condemnation that recalled its criticism of Israel.

> *It's safe to say that this attack, this bombing, was not intentional*
>
> **Mark Toner, State Department spokesperson**

"This event is utterly tragic, inexcusable, and possibly even criminal," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a statement Saturday. "International and Afghan military planners have an obligation to respect and protect civilians at all times, and medical facilities and personnel are the object of a special protection."

The U.S. State Department, on the other hand, has not rushed to criticize its own country the way it did Israel. When the *Associated Press*' Matt Lee pressed State Department spokesperson Mark Toner on the similarities between the Rafah strike and Saturday's, Toner did what Israel has done, stressing that any civilian casualties are unfortunate and unintentional, and that an investigation of the incident is underway.

"I think it's safe to say that this attack, this bombing, was not intentional," Toner said in response to Lee at a Monday press conference. "I can't get into what may or may not have happened on the ground, whether the co-ordinates were known, whether they were acknowledged. It's just too much speculation at this point. So you'll hopefully give me a pass if we wait for the investigation to run its course."

Further pushed by Lee, Toner would not call the hospital strike "appalling" or "disgraceful."

It's no shock that the U.S. would go easier on itself than on another country. But the apparent inconsistency in State Department statements speaks to what some call an unparalleled level of scrutiny of Israel. Israel, some critics say, receives far more of the world's attention and ire than do other conflict zones where the fighting is as bad or worse.

In an article published near the midpoint of last year's Gaza war, *Atlantic* correspondent Jeffrey Goldberg noted that the *New York Times* had devoted far more recent coverage to Israel and Gaza than to Syria – even though Syria's death toll was far larger. Goldberg attributed the disparity to the access journalists had to the Gaza conflict, as well as to what he called disproportionate interest in Israel and Jews.

"As far as I can tell, the *Times*, as of this writing, has not addressed this most recent round of Syria carnage in an even semi-comprehensive way," he wrote. "It goes without saying that continuing violence in Libya, Egypt, Nigeria, Yemen, and so on, has not received much attention from the *Times* in recent days."

A couple of weeks later, the *Economist* quantified that interest. In two graphs charting Google searches and death tolls for various conflicts, the magazine showed that Israel was Googled about 10 times more than Syria in early July, although the Gaza death toll was a fraction of Syria's.

But if the U.S. military is taking its cues from the IDF, Israel's Foreign Ministry isn't playing the State Department's role. Asked whether it had any reaction to Saturday's U.S. strike on the hospital, a spokesperson told *JTA* the ministry had no comment. ■

The Nishmat community is heartbroken at the brutal murder of our beloved teachers and friends, Rabbi Eitam and Naama Henkin ז"ל. We are devastated beyond words for his parents, Rabbanit Chana Henkin, Founder and Dean of Nishmat, The Jeanie Schottenstein Center for Advanced Torah Study for Women, and Rabbi Yehuda Henkin, our teacher and guide, to their four sons and to the Armoni family.

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'Wave of terror' continues in West Bank and Israel

Access to Temple Mount restricted to women and older men

JTA
JERUSALEM

Two Israelis were lightly injured and one Palestinian killed in stabbing attacks in Jerusalem and the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba on Oct. 10.

The attack in Kiryat Arba near Hebron occurred at around noon last Friday, when a Palestinian man stabbed a police officer stationed there, inflicting minor injuries. Another officer shot and killed the assailant, according to a report of the incident by the Israel Police.

According to Army Radio, the assailant tried to grab the weapon of the officer he stabbed.

Shortly thereafter, a Palestinian assailant described as a teenager by witnesses, stabbed an Israeli 16-year-old in the capital, police said. A suspect, matching the description of the attacker, was later apprehended by police. The victim suffered minor injuries.

Also last Friday, a Palestinian woman was shot at a bus station in Afula after trying to stab a uniformed man, according to *Ynet*. According to Army Radio, the victim was a soldier who was not wounded. The woman sustained moderate to serious injuries from gunshots the soldier fired at her.

The attacks happened after a Jewish Israeli man stabbed four Arabs in Dimona near Be'er Sheva that morning, reportedly as revenge for Palestinian terror attacks in previous days. Two of his victims sustained minor injuries and the remaining two were moderately injured. He was apprehended after fleeing the scene.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu strongly condemned "the attack against innocent Arabs," his office wrote in a statement. "Israel is a country of law and order. Those who use violence and break the law – from whatever side – will be dealt with to the fullest extent of the law."

Because of the spate of violence, Netanyahu shelved a plan for government offices near the Western Wall, saying that building in the sensitive area could spur more violence.

Beit Haliba was scheduled for approval by the Interior Ministry's District Committee for Construction and Planning in Jerusalem, but the approval process was suspended indefinitely following a request for its removal from the agenda by the Prime Minister's Bureau, Army Radio reported.

Police outside the Damascus Gate on Oct. 9. Only Palestinian women and men older than 50 were allowed in. FLASH 90 PHOTO

The request cited the desire to refrain from moves that could lead to an escalation in violence, the report said.

The Western Wall is adjacent to the Temple Mount, which Muslims refer to as Haram al Sharif, a site holy to both Islam and Judaism that has been the focus of the recent escalation in violence.

According to the plan, the Beit Haliba is to include office space for the Western Wall Heritage Foundation and several government offices, which the report on Army Radio did not specify.

The suspension comes amid what Netanyahu described as a "wave of terror" by Palestinians in the West Bank and Israel, and especially in Jerusalem. Two weeks ago, two Israelis in their 30s, Na'ama and Eitam Henkin, were killed in an attack near the West Bank settlement of Itamar. Several Palestinians were also killed and injured in clashes with security forces.

On Oct. 9 Israeli authorities restricted access to the Temple Mount area to Palestinian men older than 50. Women's access is unrestricted.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas accused Israel of trying to cause Palestinians to act violently.

"We will not allow ourselves to be dragged where they want to drag us," Abbas said at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new building in Ramallah, according to a translation of his speech provided by Army Radio. ■

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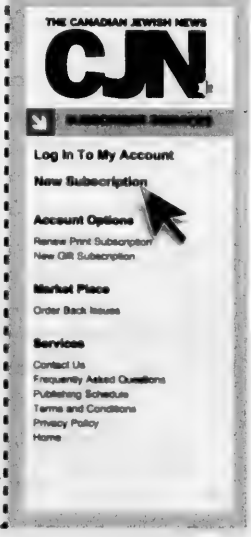


Jewish Life

Hana's Suitcase is a timeless and timely story

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Young People's Theatre (YPT) is opening its 50th season with *Hana's Suitcase*, a show it's produced three times before. But it's a play that has endured despite premiering more than 10 years ago.

"*Hana's Suitcase* can be both a timeless and timely story," says playwright Emil Sher, who adapted Karen Levine's best-selling and award-winning novel for YPT back in 2005.

Since then, the theatre company remounted it in 2007 and 2010, sharing the Brady family's poignant Holocaust story on stage for children ages 10 and up.

Those who've read Levine's book know that despite its inherent darkness, *Hana's Suitcase* is rather inspiring as it chronicles how in 2000, a group of Japanese school kids and their teacher searched for clues about Hana Brady (played by Caroline Toal) after her suitcase arrived at Tokyo's tiny Children's Holocaust Centre.

"It's such a beautiful and moving and vital kind of story," says YPT's artistic director Allen MacInnis, who's also directing the play. "And I felt that our 50th anniversary should include it. And as we planned the season, it became clear that we should open the season with it so that we could make it available to tour to other places." After its run in Toronto, it'll travel to Montreal and later, Seattle.

MacInnis knows that teaching about the Holocaust can be challenging. But this play is made for younger audiences and it follows the Japanese children as they slowly uncover details about Hana's short life.

"We assume that the audience, which is about the same age, is able to handle what they learn," says MacInnis. "We certainly don't get into some of the most horrifying details about the Holocaust, but we do get into many of the facts."

They learn that the Nazis forced Hana Brady and her family out of their home in Czechoslovakia to the Theresienstadt ghetto. Eventually, Hana ended up in Auschwitz where she died at age 13. Her brother George Brady (played by Noah Spitzer) survived and he currently resides in Toronto.

Thousands of children's drawings also survived Theresienstadt, including some of Hana's. These are incorporated into YPT's show.

"In our production, periodically we're using photographs and copies of those drawings just to connect the story for our young audience to the fact that it is also something of a documentary, that it's not just a story; it is a true story," says MacInnis.

Sher was also mindful of that when first adapting the play. He even sought out George Brady's feedback. "I felt a huge sense of responsibility to honour the story with all the respect it deserves," says Sher.

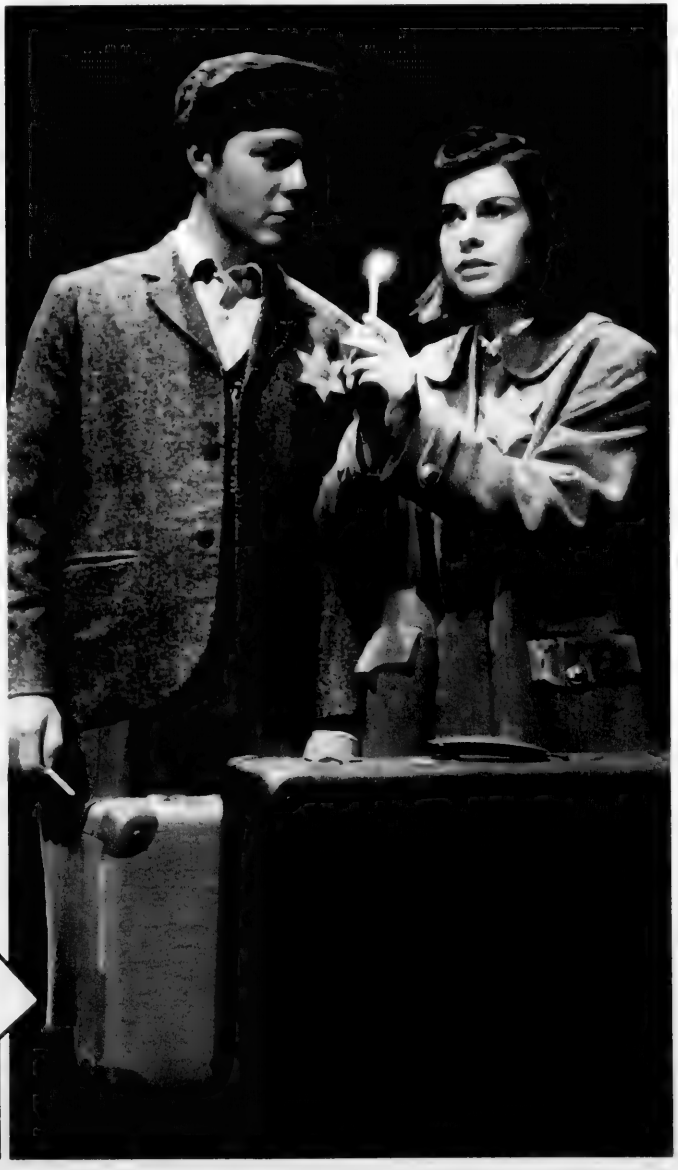
That included ending it on a hopeful note. "It would have been hopeless if Hana's story would have died with her in Auschwitz," says Sher.

Once again, a new generation of children can come to know Hana and George Brady. And beyond simply learning about them, young audiences will get the opportunity to discuss the story in a question and answer period following each performance.

Both Sher and MacInnis know that the show's themes will resonate with children today, especially amidst the ongoing refugee crisis. Ultimately, they hope audiences can learn from the Japanese children who felt so connected to Hana Brady.

"The fact that they could come to care so much about her creates such a story of hope," says MacInnis, "that maybe the next generation of children will be the kind of people that will ensure our world never does this again." ■

Hana's Suitcase *runs until Oct. 30 at the Young People's Theatre in Toronto. For tickets call 416-862-2222 or visit www.youngpeoplestheatre.ca.*



Noah Spitzer and Caroline Toal

The secret Jewishness of Trevor Noah

Michael Fraiman

It was a slow news day on March 31, when social-justice sleuths resurfaced some of the older, sexist, carelessly mean-spirited Twitter jokes from the account of Trevor Noah, the new *Daily Show* host who made his debut on Sept. 28. While cracking about fat chicks and beating up women, Noah offended some Jews, too:

"Messi gets the ball and the real players try foul him, but Messi doesn't go down easy, just like Jewish chicks."

"Almost bumped a Jewish kid crossing the road. He didn't look b4 crossing but I still would hav (sic) felt so bad in my German car!"

"Behind every successful Rap Billionaire is a double as rich Jewish man. #BeatsBy-Dreidel"

And so began a torrential flood of think-pieces as the Internet slammed into outrage overdrive. In mere hours, Noah went from being a welcome new black face on late-night TV to a misogynistic, racist, fat-shaming anti-Semite whose jokes one writer deemed as "annihilatingly stupid."

Noah slid away from social media after that, offering a limp half-apology on Twitter and largely hiding behind Comedy Central's statement of defence. He seemed shell-shocked by his tenuous propulsion to American fame. His Twitter account became mostly self-promotion for the show and his summer comedy tour (which included well-received spots at Just for Laughs in Montreal and JFL42 in Toronto), and by early April, he was busy doing public damage control with Jerry Seinfeld and Larry David at a New York Mets game – just casually hanging out with some Jews.

Now, to be clear: despite the vaguely biblical surname, Noah isn't a practising Jew (though he is, technically, one-quarter Jewish; his father is Swiss-German, his mother a Xhosa-Jewish South African), but an aura of Jewishness nonetheless lingers around him. The most obvious point of connection is *The Daily Show*, which launched not only the career of Jon Stewart, one of the most influential nebbish comedians alive, but also Josh Gad, Lewis Black and Dave Attell, among others.

But on a broader note, Noah appears to have this freedom when it comes to joking about Jews and Israel. We caught a glimpse from his brief Twitter scandal (OK, so the line about Jewish chicks going down is tired, but can we all agree that #BeatsBy-Dreidel is a fantastic pun?) – yet there's more. He has a standup bit about being called "black Hitler" by a German woman, and has talked openly (and hilariously) about his friend named Hitler – who happens to be a "very good-looking, young black man" with an unfortunate name. He obviously has opinions about Israel and Palestine (pundits have predicted his upbringing in apartheid South Africa will influence that touchy subject) and days before his *Daily Show* debut, he called Stewart his "Jewish Yoda."

There is an ease with which he approaches these themes in his comedy, a freedom that seems not to stem from a place of malice, as the South African Jewish Board of Deputies has graciously noted, but rather – and this is me inferring independently here – from a place of solidarity.

The irony behind the whole controversy is that, while Noah isn't Jewish, he has inarguably known more bigoted persecution – something we Jews are taught from childhood to understand and appreciate – than any of the modern North American Jews or social-justice warriors who've vowed to boycott his show. Growing up in Soweto, his mother – who was once shot in the face after divorcing a man who later threatened her son's life – had to pretend that Trevor wasn't her child, and was thrown in jail repeatedly for her illicit relationship with a white man. Young Trevor has lived in true squalor, and while he jokes about growing up in poverty, he very rarely speaks publicly about his personal life.

Such prejudice and terror have more to do with blackness and poverty than Judaism, of course – but, then again, blacks and Jews have long maintained an understated sort of camaraderie over civil rights, bumpy roads to immigration and a wandering sense of home. In many ways, Trevor Noah feels Jewish. Rather than ostracize him for a few dumb jokes from five years ago, we should embrace his voice and hear it out. ■

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  - On a Jewish theme of your choice
  - Submitted by **Oct. 22, 2015** to contest@thecjn.ca

Essays will be judged by an independent panel of experts.

Questions? Contact contest@thecjn.ca

Cape Breton Jewish community remembered in documentary

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

One of Carol Ann Davidson's most vivid memories of growing up on Cape Breton was singing in Sydney's Temple Sons of Israel choir with the musical Dubinsky family. Half the choir was made up of Dubinskys, who encouraged their extended family to attend synagogue and to sing. Dubinsky scion, Leon, became a prominent recording artist who worked with the Rankin Family and Rita McNeil.

"Their voices were beautiful," recalled Davidson. "It was special to sing in the choir."

The temple's revered rabbi, Israel Kenner, an opera lover, started the choir. "He was a major inspiration for the Jewish community," she said.

Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island was home to a thriving Jewish community of some 400 families in the 1940s and '50s, who met for services at the temple in Sydney and at synagogues in Glace Bay, New Waterford and Whitney Pier, one of Sydney's oldest neighbourhoods. Davidson attended the last bar mitzvah held at the 109-year-old Glace Bay synagogue, Congregation Sons of Israel, before it closed in 2010.

At the bar mitzvah, Davidson, a Toronto broadcast journalist and travel writer, videotaped several interviews with mostly former Cape Breton Islanders, who reminisced about their lives on the island and spoke about the history of the Jewish community there.

Davidson said she realized the community was dwindling and that the time was right to make a documentary. Some 70 Jews currently live on Cape Breton and the one surviving synagogue, Temple Sons of Israel, established in 1919, has only 47 congregants.

Davidson got the ear of a CBC Radio producer, Steve Wadhams, who helped her create a radio documentary with her material. Davidson's 20-minute documentary, *The Last Synagogue of Cape Breton*, which aired on CBC radio recently, can be heard on the CBC Radio website.

Cape Breton's Jews were mainly of Russian origin. Davidson's paternal grandparents, escaping persecution in Russian, were the first recorded Jewish settlers on Cape Breton in the late 1880s.

In the documentary, Gertrude Shane speaks about her parents, who immigrated to Canada from Russia, settling in New Waterford in 1921. "My father was in the army at the time of the Russian Revolution. And after the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks took over and it was dangerous for my father to stay," she said.

Carol Ann Davidson

Shane's family chose Canada as their destination, since the United States, "afraid of Bolsheviks," she recalled, had closed its doors.

Shane added that it wasn't easy for an immigrant to get into Canada at the time, particularly if you were Jewish. "For Jews, it was even more difficult because there was prejudice against them."

Some of the Jewish immigrants started working in the coal mines of Cape Breton, but like Shane's father, they soon became pedlars and then merchants. While conducting interviews, Davidson was surprised to learn that one of the first languages some Jewish Cape Bretoners learned was Gaelic, the language their customers spoke.

The people Davidson interviews in the documentary say they rarely experienced anti-Semitism on Cape Breton "We always felt very well integrated," Davidson said, adding that the diverse community was made up of people who accepted one another's differences.

One glaring incident, however, was the anti-Semitism experienced by Davidson's father, Harold, a surgeon who wanted to join the golf club in Sydney after the war in the 1940s. The club didn't admit Jews, so her dad founded the Seaview Golf and Country Club, which was open to everyone.

The golf club still exists today, but the Jews of Cape Breton are mainly gone. Several people featured in the documentary left Cape Breton in the mid-1960s to attend university, as did Davidson. Without a university on the island and given the lack of job opportunities there, leaving "was bred in the bone," Davidson said.

To hear *The Last Synagogue of Cape Breton*, visit www.cbc.ca/radio ■

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Peddling often a first step for Jews in the New World

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

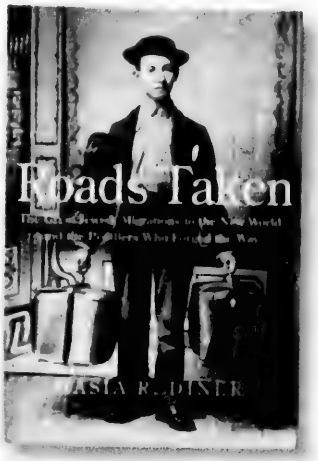
Pedlars, according to author Hasia R. Diner, were "the foot soldiers of the great migration" of Jews from eastern Europe and the Pale of Settlement to the lands of America, Canada, Britain, South Africa, Sweden and Australia from about 1780 to the 1920s, she writes in this bold, original and exhaustively researched study of Jewish pedlars.

Diner uses memoirs, autobiographies, literary accounts, diaries, oral histories, family narratives and a diversity of other sources to compile her study. Along every step of the road that this careful researcher treads, she makes sure to leave no stone unturned. The result is what one reviewer has perceptively termed "history from below," written from the vantage point of a lowly pawn rather than that of a king, queen, czar or emperor.

While many of us may believe that our grandparents or great-grandparents were pedlars, that may not have been true, at least not by Diner's definition. The push-cart vendors who plied their goods in large cities like Toronto, Montreal, New York and Buenos Aires were hawkers, not pedlars; street-corner merchants were also not pedlars, Diner writes, because they "did not perform the one act which unites all the pedlars of this book. They did not go into their customers' domestic spaces."

By bringing needed goods to the doorsteps of rural homes throughout the heartlands of America, Canada and other lands, pedlars performed a valuable service, especially for women, allowing them access to a wider range of consumer goods than before, sometimes even empowering them as consumers for the first time. Simultaneously, pedlars often provided their customers with their first actual encounter with a Jewish person. While engaged in selling their jumble of goods, the pedlars thus established a cultural bridge. Eventually many came to know their customers well enough to be invited to stay over in their homes.

Some veteran pedlars – such as Jacob Epstein of Baltimore, who sold jewelry, oilcloth, fabric for dresses, and patterns, pins, needles, thimbles and kitchenware from his Baltimore Bargain House – specialized in providing peddling supplies to newcomers. Epstein used to meet incoming ships at the docks and seek out the immigrant Jewish men as they disembarked. Then he would offer to set them up as pedlars, providing them with supplies and suggesting routes throughout the American South and mid-Atlantic coastal region.



Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way, *by Hasia R. Diner*
(Yale University Press)

The Jewish pedlar was a stock figure in literature, theatre, cartoons and folk humour, often representing "trickery, otherness and greed," Diner notes. One such figure appears in the Canadian classic novel, *Anne of Green Gables*; another more benign representation appears in Margaret Atwood's novel *Alias Grace*. The peddling life was certainly a lowly and gruelling one, but many saw it as preferable to wasting away in an oppressive sweatshop or labouring in a factory where work on the Sabbath was mandatory.

Diner walks us through the full life-cycle of the profession, from the moment the would-be itinerant trader arrives on foreign soil and is invariably assisted by a relative, friend or friendly stranger. Pedlars lived according to a weekly cycle, heading out by foot or wagon on Sundays or Mondays, visiting the customers' homes one by one, and returning home on Fridays.

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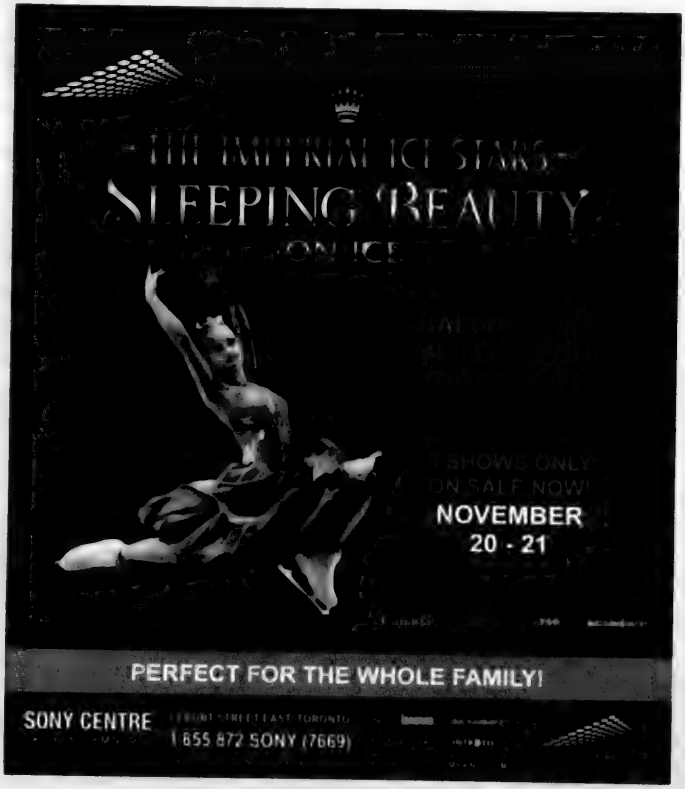


Some pedlars went from rags to riches

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Although many excelled at it, the routine was physically draining. Carried on the back, a pedlar's pack typically weighed 100 to 150 pounds.

For some, the job was shameful and humiliating. Diner cites a story of a pedlar who knocked on the door of a home in Concord only to discover that his Americanized son, a student at Harvard, happened to be visiting in the home.

"The father hastily collected his goods and left, not wanting his son to see him in such a servile position."

On another occasion, the same man, loaded down with his wares, boarded a train and was clattering down an aisle when he spotted his daughter with a group of her school friends. Terrified of embarrassing her, he quickly exited the train and waited for the next one. Newspaper reports of pedlar suicides were not uncommon.

In some towns, established shopkeepers resented pedlars for intruding into their commercial territories, and may have helped to generate ugly anti-pedlar campaigns that were tinged with racist rhetoric and violence; such crusades occurred in places such as Ireland, Quebec, Cuba and South Africa. Some American towns posted warning signs on their outskirts that proclaimed, "No Peddlers Allowed."

> *In some towns, established shopkeepers resented pedlars for intruding into their commercial territories, and may have helped to generate ugly anti-pedlar campaigns that were tinged with racist rhetoric and violence*

Besides the usual risks of road accidents or inclement weather, pedlars were mocked, arrested, chased, set upon by dogs, attacked, stoned, and even murdered.

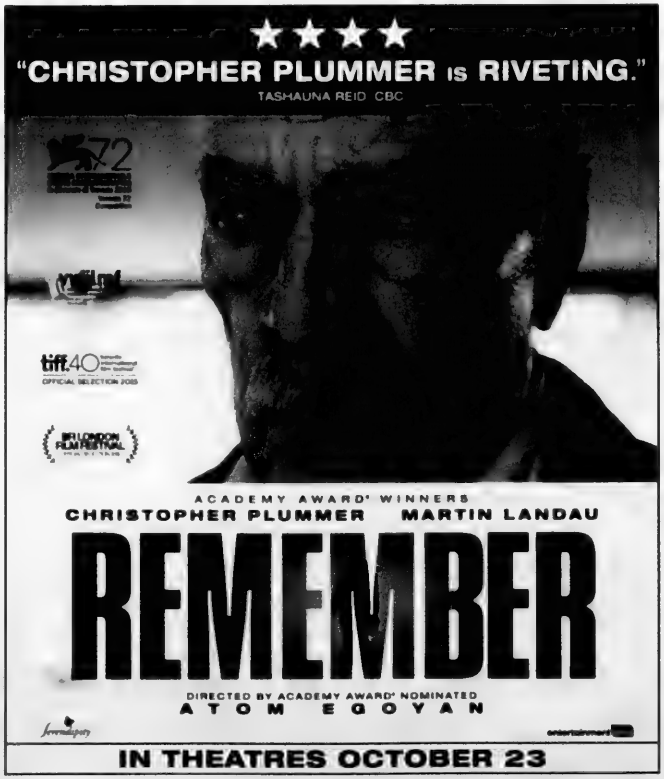
Despite these dangers, however, some ultimately found a path that led to success beyond their wildest dreams. While engaged in their itinerant lifestyle, pedlars often took on related occupations, becoming collectors of cast-off materials such as tin, bones, rags, bottles, paper and scrap metal, items that, while worthless to their former owners, could be sold in bulk at a profit. Others became pawnbrokers, money-lenders and, in the American South, cotton brokers.

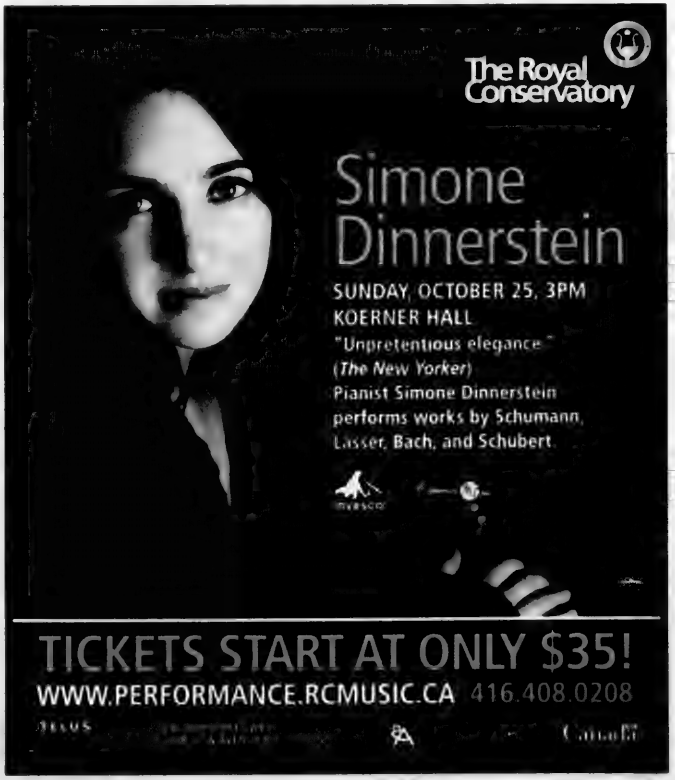
Such spin-off businesses sometimes became highly lucrative. Guggenheim, Lehman, Seligman, Straus and Eisner are the names of only a few of the legendary American businessmen from industrialists to department store moguls, who started as pedlars.

The book presents many such rags-to-riches stories. One of its dozen or so photographs is a portrait of Leon Koffler, seated in a horse-drawn buggy in Toronto in 1914; Koffler's two Toronto-area drug stores would become the genesis for the international Shopper's Drug Mart and Super-Pharm chains. Isaac Cohen, another pertinent Canadian example, was a pedlar in Kingston, Ont., who eventually built a major scrap-iron operation.

(My great-grandfather and several great-uncles worked for Cohen when they first arrived in Canada. After a couple of years, they moved to Maria Street in West Toronto Junction and established their own scrap-iron enterprise. It did well, but unfortunately, not to the degree of the scrap business operated by another Maria Street family, the Tanenbaums, which became a billion-dollar enterprise.)

Pedlar memoirs and narratives typically share the same theme. While offering an occasion for their writers "to congratulate themselves on the nation's essential goodness," they highlight America's or Canada's role as a land of opportunity and "celebrate the heroic notion of the self-made man." Transformed by success, the lowliest man on the professional totem-pole sometimes came to embody the highest of American ideals. ■





Canadian Jewish Literary Awards announces 2015 winners

JODIE SHUPAC
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Among the winners announced for this year's Canadian Jewish Literary Awards are two authors with very different stories.

Alison Pick won in the biography category for her 2014 memoir *Between Gods* (Doubleday Canada), and Ryerson University professor Ruth Panofsky will take the prize in the Yiddish category for her work *The Collected Poems of Miriam Waddington: A Critical Edition* (University of Ottawa Press).

The awards ceremony, which will honour writers in a total of nine categories, including novel, scholarship, history, youth literature, poetry, Holocaust literature and short fiction, will be held Oct. 18 at the Tribute Communities Recital Hall at York University.

The Canadian Jewish Literary Awards were created last year to fill the void left when the Koffler Centre for the Arts, which long ran the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards, discontinued the event.

The goal is to pay tribute to what are deemed the best books written by Canadian authors across genres and featuring Jewish themes.

Between Gods chronicles the Toronto-based poet and Booker Prize-nominated author's journey to uncover her father's hidden Jewish roots, the stories of her relatives who perished in the Holocaust and her ultimate conversion, as an adult on the verge of marrying a non-Jewish man, from secular Christianity to Judaism.

Toronto author and poet Alison Pick wins Canadian Jewish Literary Award for her memoir *Between Gods*. EMMA LEE PHOTO

> *I feel like it's a Jewish book in the sense that the main theme, for me, is my uncovering the family secret [of being Jewish].*

But the story is also very much about Pick's recurring episodes of depression, her speculation about intergenerational trauma and relationship struggles.

"I feel like it's a Jewish book in the sense that the main theme, for me, is my uncovering the family secret [of being Jewish]. It's about me feeling a strong resonance with Judaism and making my way back to it," Pick explained.

As with any story that's told well, she said, the more particular details are woven into it, the more it paradoxically bears a kind of universal quality.

"People might to relate to the specific content of this struggle, but everyone can relate to the different themes [the book] includes regarding what it means to be human, to suffer, to face adversity, to find oneself. I think of this as both a Jewish and a universal book," she said.

Since finishing the memoir, which closes when Pick gives birth to a daughter, her life has been transformed by raising a child – and a Jewish child, at that, Pick said.

"There's taking her to shul, celebrating Jewish holidays, making Shabbat in our home. It's pretty cool to see the ways in which my daughter takes Judaism for granted in a way that I was never able to," she said.

Panofsky, a professor of English whose research includes Jewish Canadian writers, said she was "absolutely thrilled" to learn she'd won, though she admitted she was surprised to learn it was in the Yiddish category, which recognizes books either in Yiddish or about Yiddish culture.

"I was delighted the committee saw the importance of framing Waddington as a Yiddishist," Panofsky said.

The Collected Poems of Miriam Waddington is the first scholarly edition of the poetry of Waddington, a translator and the first Jewish Canadian woman to publish poetry written in Canada. She died in 2004.

In addition to 50 poems – both published and unpublished – that Panofsky selected from Waddington's archives, the two-volume collection includes various translations of poems that Waddington did from Yiddish, German and Russian into English.

Panofsky wrote the book's introduction, as well as supplementary notes.

"Many moons ago, as a young graduate student, I did my master's paper on Waddington's poetry. I met her at York University at the time, and she was kind and generous to me and encouraged me in my interest. We remained in contact over the years," Panofsky said.

She first took on the project of compiling Waddington's work as part of a collaborative project called Editing Modernism in Canada, which involves publishing works of poetry, fiction and non-fiction that were either never published or are long out of print.

"I accepted the offer somewhat naively not knowing how big a project it would become," Panofsky said. "But I love Waddington's poetry and this gave me a chance to go back and undertake new archival work of hers, which was terrifically interesting." ■

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Jewish women new Canadian 50-plus tennis champs

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Francine Brock only wishes her late dad could have been there to see how the love of tennis he instilled in her finally paid off.

Brock and partner Dawn Tanzer are now the over-50 women's doubles champions in Canada after their win at the Steve Stevens Senior National Tennis Championships held in Montreal from Aug. 16 to 22.

This is the first national title for Brock, 55, and Tanzer, 51, who have been a team for more than 10 years, steadily capturing impressive showings at club and league tournaments, and a first-place finish for over-45s at the provincial level.

The duo is now qualified to compete at the world senior championships next June in Helsinki, Finland.

"This is quite an accomplishment for two Jewish girls from Montreal," Brock said. Tanzer added: "It's really cool, really neat. I'm glad I helped Francine make a dream come true."

She recalled how her father, Charles Bishinsky, spent many patient hours teaching tennis to his triplets – two daughters and a son – on the modest municipal courts in Chomedey.

The Tennis Canada-sanctioned Steve Stevens event drew almost 500 participants and was played on 32 outdoor courts at Montreal area tennis clubs, with $25,000 in prize money at stake. The age categories ranged from 35 to over 80.

That meant the competition was stiff, and it was the hottest, most humid days of the summer. Brock and Tanzer, who played four rounds on the Côte St. Luc Tennis Club, beat Marlene Hecker of Vancouver and Sandy Lee Mackie of Nova Scotia in the finals, 2-6, 6-2, 6-1.

In the semi-finals, they defeated the No. 1 seeds Dale Kozicz and Kathy Mueller of Toronto.

Brock and Tanzer, who play at the Hampstead Tennis Club in summer and the indoor Nuns' Island Tennis Club in the off-season, were the fifth-place seeds tied with three other pairs going into the tournament.

They are coached by Andreanne Martin, head pro at the Mount Royal Tennis Club, who won the over-45 women's singles and doubles.

Although officially an amateur meet, the Steve Stevens championships do include tennis teaching pros, and a number of former international-level players, including

Francine Brock, left, and Dawn Tanzer

Davis Cup alumni, were in the hunt.

Brock, who was an all-round athlete in her youth, came second in Quebec for her age group at 14, but then played only for fun later stopping altogether to work as a physiotherapist and raise two children.

In 2002, she got back into the sport after a 10-year layoff, with the full support of her husband Ian, who built her a court at their Ste. Agathe country home.

Of the many sports Brock engaged in as a youngster, she finds tennis the most exhilarating.

"I just love the high I get with a good shot," she said. "There's no feeling like it."

Tanzer, a mother of three, and Brock have different styles that complement each other. The latter is especially skilled at the net, while Tanzer plays a longer game.

"We are really opposites," said Tanzer. "Francine has finesse, she's really good with her hands. I'm more of a power player."

Tanzer also spent her childhood in Chomedey, but the two women only really got to know each other when their kids were in school together.

She was also athletic as a kid, but only played tennis at camp, never competitively.

"I like the exercise, the competition. Tennis is very social. It was obviously a lot of fun to play in the championships," said Tanzer, who before having children was athletic co-ordinator at the YM-YWHA. "But I think Francine is more excited than me."

Another Jewish winner at the championships was Brahm Faber, 82, who with partner Pierre Descoteaux won the men's over-80 doubles. Faber also placed third in the singles in his category.

He earned a gold medal at the Maccabiah Games in Israel last year. ■

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Different survivor stories, common themes

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

When Canadian filmmaker Jules Arita Koostachin met Holocaust survivor Pinchas Gutter on a March of Remembrance and Hope trip that brings students to Poland and Germany to learn about the Holocaust, she felt an instant connection with him.

"We went to Poland and Germany with two Holocaust survivors. There were 20 of us. I became really close with Pinchas because he reminded me of my father," recalled Koostachin, an Attawapiskat First Nation member who was born in Moose Factory, Ont., and raised by her Cree-speaking grandparents in Moosonee, Ont., and her mother in Ottawa.

"We ended up being really close, and I followed him around. It was a really intense two weeks. We went to concentration camps and museums and monuments, and it was just an incredible, intense time."

She said having witnessed Gutter's emotions swing from anguished sobs to joyful singing, she felt a need to introduce him to her 72-year-old mother, Rita Okimawininew, a survivor of one of Canada's most notorious residential schools, where thousands of Aboriginal children were systematically abused physically, sexually and emotionally.

"It was incredible to see him crying, and then singing and dancing, and I thought, I really want him to meet my mom. I thought this is something my mom needs to see – that you can still sing and dance," Koostachin said.

Following her trip, Koostachin was inspired to write, produce and direct a 15-minute short documentary called *Without Words* – with little more than borrowed film equipment and a budget of $500 – which will be screened at imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, the largest Indigenous media arts festival in the world, running Oct. 14 to 18 in Toronto.

Without Words tells two different survivor stories, but Koostachin said she was careful not to make it seem as though she was comparing the atrocities or the individual experiences.

"It is not a comparison of the trauma. What I wanted was to bring two very incredible elders together in story and look at the cross-cultural healing," she said.

Despite the fact that she did not want the two stories to be compared, she said there were common themes that emerged.

"They talk about forgiveness, they talk about having to hide their emotions. Pinchas talks about going to the concentration camp and losing his family, and my mom is talking about her mother not being with her when they put her on the boat with the other kids."

Koostachin said her mother was shipped off to a residential school when she was five years old, and when she came home at 16, she returned with a Grade 4 level education and a lifetime of traumatic memories.

"I've spent a long time working on my mom's story. When I was going to school, even when I was getting my master's, people weren't really speaking to that experience. We were speaking to it within our own families and communities, but publicly, there wasn't a lot of dialogue about it. People would say, 'Oh, that didn't really happen,' because it was swept under the rug for so long. There wasn't any real place to have that dialogue," she said.

"I tried to provide a platform for her to share her story, even though it's difficult for her and she's becoming more comfortable with it. It is such an important story to be shared. When I saw Pinchas dancing and singing, I thought about my mom, who I haven't really seen laugh. I haven't really seen her happy, I've never seen her in that place… So I brought them together for this film."

Jules Koostachin SUMMER FAITH GARCIA PHOTO

Koostachin, a woman who has balanced her film career with work in the social service sector, having worked in a women's shelter for Aboriginal victims of violence, said her inspiration behind the film was to humanize the traumatic stories and teach future generations about the history.

"Residential schools are only now coming to the forefront. The Holocaust, we still have survivors amongst us and their children and grandchildren. How do we learn from each other cross-culturally?" ■

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Digging up the ongoing mystery of Jerusalem

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, JERUSALEM

It's often said that almost anywhere you put a shovel into the earth in Israel, you will find historical relics. It's not literally true, of course, but it does happens with a frequency that seems remarkable to North Americans.

In the Givati parking lot a few hundred steps south of the Old City, for example, excavations have uncovered layer upon layer of city dwellings that range in time from the Second Temple period to the Middle Ages.

The bottom strata is presumed to be the royal palace of Queen Helene, a monarch who converted to Judaism about two millennia ago. Roman, Byzantine and Muslim remains are also layered into the site. Unearthed artifacts include a fabulous treasure-horde of some 264 shiny gold Byzantine-era coins.

By no means unique, the Givati parking lot is one of the most fertile of many new archeological sites that have been discovered in Israel in recent years. Having visited the Givati site this summer during a tour of the nearby City of David ("Ir David"), I wanted to learn the backstory of how Israel routinely processes its rich archeological heritage.

At the Israel Antiquities Authority's (IAA) large workshop in the industrial, high-tech suburb of Jerusalem of Har Hotzvim, I met with Elisheva Kamaisky, a senior conservator, who showed me some vessels she was reconstructing. Hundreds of dusty pottery shards lay on several work tables in her office, and thousands more were scattered across other tables along the building's long hallways. Besides pottery, conservators of relics of metal, glass and organic and stone materials also work in the IAA's Har Hotzvim labs.

"I'm working on a site called Eshtaol, near Beit Shemesh," she told me. "They're widening the road and they found this site from the early bronze period. We've got quite a nice selection of vessels here."

Typically, all work halts when archeological remains are discovered during highway repairs or the excavation of new buildings or infrastructure projects.

Elisheva Kamaisky BILL GLADSTONE PHOTO

Mandated by law, an IAA crew arrives to document the site and remove all portable relics; only then is the site released back to the developer.

The IAA is a government body founded to oversee and protect Israel's archeological artifacts. Conservators must perform a sort of triage to determine which of the many artifacts that are discovered in the field get restored. Usually only the best ones get rebuilt; many others are studied, documented, and stored as numbered pieces in a drawer somewhere.

"We're working on vessels from the beginning of the invention of pottery from the start of the pottery neolithic age, which occurred about 8,000 years ago," said Kamaisky. Pottery, which is Kamaisky's specialty, can reveal much about a people's culture, from their technological proficiency to the extent of their trade routes, she explains.

At the Pequi'in burial cave in the Galilee, for example, archeologists found many clay ossuaries fashioned about 4500 BCE to hold the bones of the deceased.

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Outstanding ossuaries on exhibit at Israel Museum and National Treasury

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"They are so unique, so beautiful, so rich in artistic language, painting and three-dimensional sculpting," Kamaisky said. "To think that these people had the technological ability to build these vessels and to fire them – not just one or a few, but as an industry – is just amazing. I'm astounded by their artistic freedom."

The most outstanding ossuaries are now on exhibit in the Israel Museum and the others are in the National Treasury, a huge storage facility in central Israel where all of the portable finds of excavations are kept, and to which researchers are given access.

Down the hall, in the metal shop, Kamaisky introduces me to another conservator working on some antiquated pieces of jewelry and a horseshoe, probably from Roman times. "It's so diverse, all the materials that come through this lab."

Many finds, of course, are not portable and so must remain in the field. Days earlier, a family in Jerusalem had discovered during routine home renovations that a 2,000-year-old mikvah lay immediately beneath their living room.

> *I'm astounded by their artistic freedom*
>
> **Elisheva Kamaisky**

"We were involved in doing the scientific excavation and taking the dimensions and documenting it, and putting it into the overall context of the knowledge of Jerusalem in that period," Kamaisky said. "It's still there under that house and there is access to it. It's another piece that goes into the puzzle of the ongoing mystery of Jerusalem." ■

25 Questions for a Jewish Mother

Actress/comedian Judy Gold stars in *25 Questions for a Jewish Mother*, running Oct. 17-25 at the Toronto Centre for the Arts. Gold and award-winning playwright Kate Moira Ryan embarked on a five-year journey across the United States asking Jewish mothers 25 questions. The result is this moving and humorous performance, presented by the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company. www.hgjewishtheatre.com

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The Socialite

Michael Bregman and Katie Osborne

Whitney, Marlie and Fred Waks

Israeli Consul General DJ Schneeweiss and Marni Brinder Byk, Save a Child's Heart executive director

Dr. Randi Rose and Shelley Diamond, UnGala co-chairs

Dr. Leigh Solomon and Dr. Louis Peltz, chair of Save a Child's Heart's board

Michael and Janette Diamond, Cole Diamond

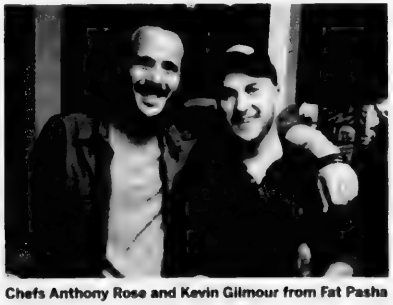
Mark Gould and Marla Buck

An 'UnGala'

Equally fabulously dressed up or down, guests at the recent "UnGala" raised over $630,000 while enjoying the delectable culinary collaboration of chefs Jonathan Waxman, Matt Robertson, and Anthony Rose. Funds raised support Save a Child's Heart Foundation's Israeli program which provides free life-saving cardiac treatment to children from developing countries. ■

– *The Socialite*

Ron Bernbaum and Renee Bleeman



Chefs Anthony Rose and Kevin Gilmour from Fat Pasha

Leslie Giller and Andrew Hoffman

Keith Ray and Leslie Gales

Della Langley and Camille Dan

Kitty and George Grossman

Mitchell Cohen and Janice Lewis

RYAN VAN DERHOUT, LUMINOUS WEDDINGS PHOTOS

The Socialite wants your photos. Email thesocialite@thecjn.ca for submission details.

What's New

OCT. 15 - OCT. 22

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Oct. 15

CHAI MITZVAH
Rabbi Micah Streiffer (Temple Kol Ami) and **Rabbi Noam Katz** (Leo Baeck Day School) teach a monthly class at 8:30 a.m. Call 905-709-2620.

SPOUSAL BEREAVEMENT GROUPS
Adath Israel Congregation offers bereavement support groups for widows, Oct. 15-Nov. 19, 1-3 p.m.; for men and women Oct. 20-Nov. 24, 7:30 p.m. Free for members, $180 for non-members. **Nilly**, 416-635-5340.

LULLABIES FROM EXILE
Lenka Lichtenberg and **Yair Dalal** perform in concert *Lullabies From Exile*, 7:30 p.m., Beth Isaiah Synagogue, 47 Surrey St., Guelph. Free.

SCOTCH TASTING
Pride of Israel Synagogue holds a dinner and Scotch tasting, 7 p.m. RSVP 416-226-0111.

Saturday, Oct. 17

LULLABIES FROM EXILE
Lenka Lichtenberg and **Yair Dalal** perform in concert, 7:30 p.m., Darchei Noam Congregation, $20.

Sunday, Oct. 18

TALMUD CLASS FOR WOMEN
Rabbi Noah Sonenberg teaches a Talmud class for women, Sundays, 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. www.mekorot.ca or 416-877-2050.

CLUB CHAVERUT
Angelo Di Castro and **Christopher Dallo** perform at brunch, 11:30 a.m., Beth David Synagogue. $10. RSVP **Rose**, 905-764-8141.

ADULT EDUCATION
Rabbi Eva Goldfinger discusses "Origins and evolution of the Jewish festivals," 10 a.m. Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, (at St. Andrew's Junior High School) 131 Fenn Ave. $20.

SUNDAY LEARNING FOR WOMEN
Ruth Rothman discusses "Holding on to Yom Tov," **Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig** discusses "Torah perspectives on greeting others," 10 a.m., Congregation B'nai Torah.

ASSOCIATED OPEN HOUSE
Associated Hebrew Schools holds an open house at 10 a.m., Posluns Education Centre, 18 Neptune Dr., and at 3 p.m. Associated Cedarvale, Beth Sholom Synagogue, 1445 Eglinton Ave. W. RSVP pgreenspan@ahschools.com

Oct. 27, open house at Kamin Education Centre, 300 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill, 7:30 p.m. RSVP mkomlos@ahschools.com

PARSHAT NOAH
Beth David Synagogue presents the story of Noah with real animals, 10:30 a.m. $5 per child, adults free. www.bethdavid.com

JEWISH LITERARY AWARDS
The Canadian Jewish Literary Awards will be presented 2 p.m., Accolade East Building, York University. Free. www.cjlawards.ca

ISRAEL TRIP MEETING
Beginners Israel trip meeting, 7:30 p.m. Contact **Rabbi Gary Zweig**, gszweig@gmail.com or 647-294-6305.

SINGLES IN THE PARK
Be entertained by **Jay and Shannon**, who perform for Singles in the Park (single, divorced and widowed Jewish men and women over 50), 7 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre. $15/$20. Must RSVP debbygo@rogers.com or 416-631-0005.

Oct. 25, Singles in the Park hosts a ghost walk at the University of Toronto, 4 p.m. $10.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Oct. 29 is Oct. 19. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Thanking a special teacher

The Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, Wallenberg campus, hosted a retirement celebration for Tommy Jutcovich last month. More than 150 former students and colleagues attended to pay tribute to Jutcovich, whose career in education spanned 43 years, starting at Associated Hebrew Day Schools, CHAT and Ner Israel Yeshiva and continuing in the Toronto District School Board. The Tommy Jutcovich Fund for Families with Medical Needs was formed at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto for those who wish to honour him.

Monday, Oct. 19

LUNCH AND LEARN
Ayelet Tsabari discusses her book *The Best Place on Earth*, 1 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. $25 or $90/$110 for 6 sessions. RSVP 416-781-3511.

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Iain Scott discusses "The four greatest scenes in all opera," 2 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $45/series; $15/ lecture. 416-449-3880.

YOUTH VOLLEYBALL
Maccabi Canada's volleyball program starts today and Oct. 20, 6:30 p.m., Anne Frank Public School, Vaughan. 416-398-0514, ext. 204.

Tuesday, Oct. 20

LUNCHING AND LEARNING
Food/travel writer **Sara Waxman** discusses "How did I get from there to here," at Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

Andy de Campos performs big band music at National Council of Jewish Women's lunch and learn program, noon, 4700 Bathurst St. $9. RSVP 416-633-5100.

JOYS OF JEWISH MUSIC
Faye Kellerstein sings and discusses "Great songs of the Yiddish theatre," 1:30 p.m. Beth Tzedec Congregation. Free. RSVP 416-781-3511.

COUNTER-MISSIONARY SERIES
Rabbi Michael Skobac presents a 6-week counter-missionary lecture series, 8 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. Free. 416-633-3838.

BOOK AND MOVIE CLUB
Heather Kassel discusses "Genius and eccentricity as seen in the movies *Mr. Turner*, *The Theory of Everything* and *The Imitation Game*," (movies must be viewed in advance), 8 p.m., Adath Israel Synagogue, $50/$85 for 6 sessions: $10/$15 per review.

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Wednesday, Oct. 21

BIBLICAL DAY TRIPS

Hana Werner discusses "Lot's wife: torn and doomed," 1:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. $10. RSVP 416-781-3511.

UNIQUE LIVES SERIES

Dr. Beth Abramson discusses "Women and heart disease," 7 p.m., Temple Sinai.

VIP CLUB

The VIP Club (for visually impaired seniors) holds a concert, 12:30 p.m. at Bernard Betel Centre. **Bess** 905-508-2892

REEL AND SPIEL

Beth Emeth Synagogue screens *The Frisco Kid*, 7 p.m. $5.

JEWISH SPIRITUALITY SEMINAR

Rabbi Michael Skobac teaches a 6-week seminar on Jewish spirituality, 8 p.m., Temmy Latner Forest Hill Jewish Centre, 446 Spadina Ave. 416-789-0020.

Thursday, Oct. 22

CHALLAH BAKE

Beth David Synagogue holds a community challah bake, 7 p.m.

HOW JEWS CHANGED THE WORLD

Larry Rachlin discusses "Jews who changed how we look at everything," 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers needed to distribute poppies Oct. 30-Nov. 11 in the Bathurst Street and St. Clair Avenue area for the Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch. Email sgs823@sympatico.ca

Volunteers needed once a month to drive vision impaired seniors to social events. Call **Sheila**, 905-731-9667.

BE THE MATCH

Adath Israel Congregation holds a stem cell and bone marrow clinic, Oct. 25, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- **Effective parenting**: A 4-session group to help parents with children aged 2-10. Starts Oct. 19, 7-9 p.m., Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St.
- **Beyond the chupah:** A two-session marriage preparation class for couples who will be married in the next year. Oct. 18, 25, 11 a.m., Temple Sinai.
- **Mind body connection for women:** An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Oct. 26 at 1 p.m. or Oct. 29 at 7 p.m. at Lipa Green Centre; or Oct. 28 at 7 p.m. at Lebovic Campus or 35 Madison Ave.
- **Parenting the child/teen with ADHD:** A 4-week group for parents of children diagnosed with ADHD. Oct. 29, 7 p.m.
- **Separation 101:** A 1-session workshop for adults in the process of separating from their spouse. Oct. 29, 7 p.m.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Bring your lunch and play social games, Oct. 15, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. followed by **Beverly Fingerhut** discussing "The great synagogues of Paris, Florence and Amsterdam," Oct. 15 and 22, 1 p.m. Register 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or email lisar@mnjcc.org.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and Ping-Pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9.; Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.; exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Oct. 18, **Debra Staiman** performs in concert, *From 2nd Avenue to Broadway*, 1:30 p.m.; Oct. 20, **Gerald Zeidenberg** discusses "Modern Russia through the lives of three heroes and a villain," 10 a.m.; Oct. 22, lecture on "Senior care planning," 1:30 p.m.; Oct. 25 Open house celebrating 50 years, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Bridge, partners required, Tuesdays, noon; Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; Bring your creative crafts, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.; live entertainment Nov. 18, 2 p.m.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- Music for babies and toddlers starts Oct. 15, 10 a.m.
- Screening of the film *Sturgeon Queens*, Oct. 20 at noon.
- "A Taste of Jazz," presented by the Royal Conservatory of Music, Tuesdays, Nov. 3-17, 1- 3 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Celebrating women artists," Tuesdays to Nov. 10, 1 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

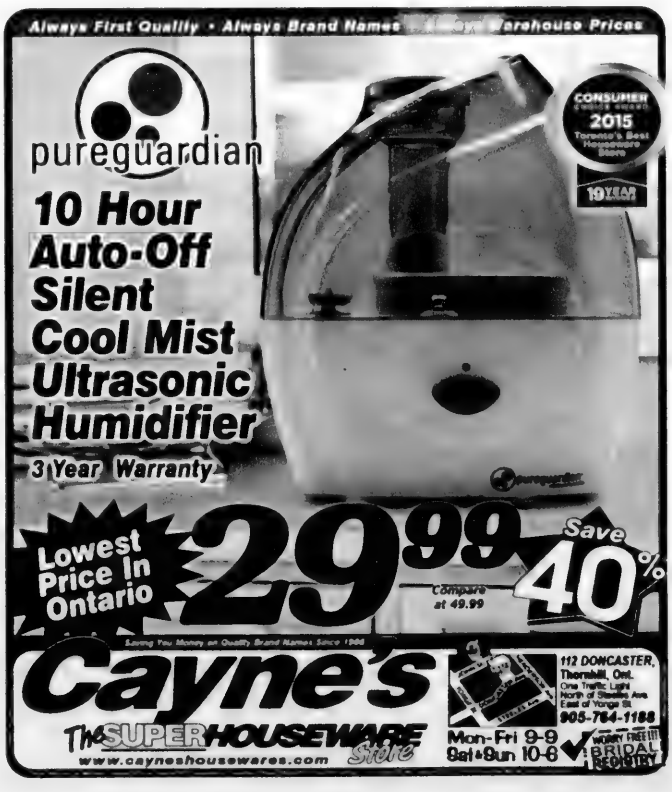
750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- *Passages*, mixed media by **Alice Vander Vennen** is in the gallery until Oct. 28.
- The gallery is looking for an Israeli visual artist for March 2016. Submissions close Nov. 1. Email deannad@mnjcc.org
- Fall supper club for young adults with developmental disabilities, Wednesdays till Nov. 18, 4-8:30 p.m. Ext. 330
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities. Ongoing to Dec. 6, 1 p.m. Ext. 330.
- Shabbat family party, spaces still available, Fridays, 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Ext. 388.
- Fitness: MELT full body method, Oct. 21-Nov. 18, 11 a.m.; Inclusive run club, starts Oct. 22 at 6 p.m. or Nov. 7 at noon; High Intensity Interval Training, starts Oct. 19 and Oct. 20. Ext. 574.
- Support group for adult children of Holocaust survivors, starts Oct. 29. RSVP **Shoshana Yakobi**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2271.
- Wheel dance: learn Latin dance in a mixed abilities class. Oct. 18-Dec. 6, 6 p.m. liviyam@mnjcc.org or ext. 330.
- From tummies to mummies: Pre- and post-natal bootcamp, aquafit and yoga classes. Call ext. 567.
- Open community choir, starts Oct. 19, 7:30 p.m. with **Gillian Stecyk**.
- Social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Ext. 330.
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the art of Degas, Oct. 19, 26, 1:30 p.m
- *Defending the Caveman*, a comedy about the sexes, weekends Oct. 16-30, Al Green Theatre, 8 p.m.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society screens *The Flat*, Oct. 18. Guest speaker at 4 p.m. show, **Shlomo Schwartzberg;** at 7:30 p.m. show **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein.**
- Living with dementia: A program for caregivers (and a concurrent workshop for the family member), Oct. 19-Dec. 16. Email gerri.richman@sympatico.ca
- Kat-ka Team, activities for students in grades 2-8, meets Oct. 25, 1:30 p.m. With Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror. RSVP shaliach.gesher@gmail.com
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein.** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

- Royal Conservatory of Music presents "The enigma of Russian music," Oct. 20, 7 p.m.
- Screening of *Above and Beyond*, Nov. 8, 7 p.m. ■



SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

Don't forget your influenza vaccination

Dr. Michael Gordon

It happens every fall season. Patients ask if they have to take the influenza vaccination "again," on the premise that, like so many other vaccines, especially the ones given in childhood, vaccinations should last for years.

Those who have paid attention over the years and have listened to their doctors – who likely have explained the reasons why yearly vaccination is imperative to decrease the risk of influenza infection – usually understand the reasons.

Unlike many of the childhood illnesses for which vaccination is required for protection, the influenza virus changes its character often. In childhood vaccines, where the virus does not change very often, once vaccinated, the body stores the knowledge of that virus, and when exposed to it, produces the body's correct antibodies to ward off the infection – mostly very efficiently as evidenced by the overwhelming success of childhood vaccination campaigns worldwide.

For complex reasons, the flu virus can change its makeup so that its antigens (identifying proteins) can change sufficiently that a previously formulated vaccine may not be effective with a new strain. Each year, immunologists and vaccine manufactures track the strains of the influenza virus, which often emerge in the Far East first, and after they identify the main strains, they manufacture a vaccine that often has three or four strains in it, effectively dealing with the most likely culprits in the usually worldwide epidemic of influenza illness.

Sometimes there is an error in identifying the dominant strains, which appears to be the case thus far this year. This means the success rate of immunization may be as low as 30 to 40 per cent, but that is better than no protection.

One of hears people say, "I never get the flu," or "I got the vaccine last year and then got the flu anyway," or "I got the vaccine and got a terrible reaction to it."

Although these events may occur, there are usually other explanations for what happened – such as the illness that occurred was not true influenza but another virus infection for which the vaccines are not protective.

One excuse that should have the least impact on people's decisions is the misconceived belief of those in the "anti-vaxxer" camp. Despite the clear evidence disproving any association between measles vaccine and childhood autism, the anti-vaxxers try to propagate various conspiracy theories that vaccines are promoted by the big vaccine corporations for profit motives and are in cahoots with governments and public health agencies.

Older people who have experienced the terrible childhood illness epidemics and the major influenza epidemics of the last century should be aware of the devastating effects of influenza and sometimes unnecessary deaths it can cause.

To emphasize the importance of the yearly vaccine, there is a recent study published in the Oct. 5 online issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, one of the world's most prestigious medical publications. Researchers studied nearly 2,800 patients hospitalized for community-acquired pneumonia in four U.S. cities during three flu seasons.

The patients with influenza-associated pneumonia were significantly less likely than controls to have received the flu vaccine (17 per cent vs. 29 per cent). Dr. Thomas Schwenk, deputy editor of *NEJM Journal Watch General Medicine*, commented: "In addition to reducing the risk of hospitalization for influenza infection itself, influenza vaccination appears to reduce the likelihood of hospitalization for influenza-associated complications such as pneumonia. Perhaps the more telling piece of data in the study is that only 29 per cent of the overall population had been vaccinated, emphasizing the need for more effective delivery of preventive services."

The last sentence is the most telling – in an era of almost universal availability of a highly effective prevention of influenza, less than 30 per cent of that defined population took advantage of this marvellous miracle of modern medicine that decreases the likelihood of getting a potentially life-threatening illness with only the inconvenience of a minor injection.

Get it – don't find reasons to ignore the benefits of this simple and very effective preventative vaccination. ■

Mazel Tov!

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Happy fourth birthday to our dear, happy girl Maya Lipovitch. Love from your brother Coby, Mom, Dad, Bubbie, Zaide, Uncle Levi, Vovó and family from Brazil.

Mazel tov Doreen & Sol Israel Sternfeld celebrating their 60th anniversary Oct. 30. Love from your family, Robin, Neil, David Lewis, Michael, Corey, Sienna Rebecca Ann.

Happy 80th and 85th birthdays to Lory & Harry Beer with much love and continued good health from your children, grandchildren family and friends.

The engagement of Jenna Appleton & Jesse Lieberman was happily celebrated recently by their families and friends. Love and best wishes now and always!

Mazel tov to Luba & Pesach Bosis on their 50th anniversary. Love, Pesach, Dalia, Betty, Neil, Howie, Lani, Chelsea, Michael and Daniel.

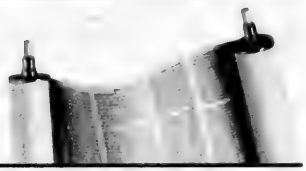
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Parshah

Noach | Genesis 6:9-11:32



Yacov Fruchter considers what it means to 'exit the lifeboat'
Rabbi Shalom Spira looks at the lessons of the Tower of Babel
Rachael Turkienicz explores the story of Noah's wife, Naamah

Yacov Fruchter

When given the list of those who will enter the ark, Noah is told: "You and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives" (6:18). The men are listed first. Why? Rashi explains that from this, we learn that marital relations were forbidden during the flood. God was implementing the first mechitzah – separation between men and women.

Rashi deduces this by comparing the above list to the order in which the groups are mentioned after the flood. They are now listed in couples: "Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you" (8:16). Following the flood, they are again permitted to procreate.

Interestingly, later in the parshah, when we read about the covenant with Noah, Rashi offers a different perspective: "Noah worried about engaging in procreation until God promised him that he would not destroy the world again."

While we previously understood the abstention from sex to be adherence to a commandment, this second commentary from Rashi suggests that Noah and his wife were unwilling to bring any more children into the world unless they had a commitment from God that there would be no interference with the natural order to deliberately destroy creation and their children. This is reminiscent of the midrash that says our ancestors in Egypt stopped having children following Pharaoh's decree until the women bravely took the reins and reconnected with their husbands.

I am reminded of my own family history. My paternal grandparents lost three children during the Holocaust, and still found it within themselves to rebuild. My uncle was born in Russia in March 1945, and in 1951, less than six months after they arrived in Israel, my father Haim, literally and symbolically meaning life, was born. This parshah is an important reminder that no matter how difficult life is at times, we must "exit the lifeboat" and transition from survival to living. ■

Yacov Fruchter is director of community building and spiritual engagement at Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) bears a practical lesson whose precise nature merits analysis, as follows.

The Gemara, Chagigah 15b, expounds upon Isaiah 33:18 ("where is he who counts the towers") as referring to scholars fluent in "three hundred halachot regarding a flying tower." Rashi offers several interpretations: (a) When a scribe writes a *lamed* too high, thereby threatening the calligraphic integrity of the overhanging line, the *lamed* is metaphorically called "a flying tower." (b) The Tower of Babel. (c) The calculation of whether or not corpse impurity will spread from one room to another in a tower.

Interpretations (a) and (c) reflect our quotidian experience. We have seen scribes correct all sorts of orthographic blunders, and we have heard of hospitals struggling to determine whether or not kohanim may enter the premises. But what is the meaning of (b)?

Perhaps we may gain insight from the parallel Gemara in Sanhedrin 106b. There, Rashi replaces (b) with two clearer options: (b1) the debate [in Nazir 55a] whether a passenger sealed within a vehicle that overflies a cemetery is shielded from contamination, and (b2) expertise in the various ways that sorcerers levitate objects (including towers), as per Sanhedrin 68a, that although a Jew may never practice paranormal crafts, he can study wizardry in order to understand how to avoid it.

The Tower of Babel architects sought to achieve global unity, both geographic and linguistic. Such harmony is indeed a most noble goal, whose pursuit is guided by appropriate halachic caveats. First, when traversing geographic frontiers, we must ascertain whether our vehicles are overflying cemeteries, as elaborated by Rabbi J. David Bleich (*Tradition* 36:4). Second, when we speak with the nations of the world, our dialogue must be limited to the secular welfare of humankind, as enunciated by Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik (*Tradition* 6:2). ■

Rabbi Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

One of the best-known stories in the Torah is Noah's Ark. We read of Noah, his family and all the animals saved in the ark while God floods the world. When Noah and his wife emerge from the ark, they become the new Adam and Eve, and the world is reborn through them.

For two people who are so important to humanity, it's interesting that we only know the name of one of them. Who is Noah's wife?

The sages state that Noah's wife is Naamah, a descendant of Cain. In fact, the list of Cain's descendants culminates with a woman named Naamah.

One might conclude that the sages have deliberately included Cain's "killer gene" in Naamah. In that way, she is paralleled to Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit and brought death into the world. But why have a second Adam and Eve if they are doomed to repeat the actions of the first? What would be gained?

Interestingly, the sages point out a tremendously redemptive aspect to Cain. After an honest confrontation with God, Cain owns his sin and realizes the significance of what he has done. In the end, Cain repents.

Cain is the first human being to sin and repent, and this trait will be lost to humanity if his line disappears. Naamah is identified as Noah's wife and is specifically descended from Cain so that all of humanity will inherit the ability to be accountable and repent.

Noah is the descendant of Adam and Eve's son, Seth. According to the sages, Adam and Eve were so traumatized by the death of their son Abel that they separated for many years. They finally reconciled and gave birth to a third son, Seth.

Noah and Naamah become the new Adam and Eve, but they represent very different things. The world has a chance for healing because Naamah represents repentance and Noah represents reconciliation. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto. Rachaelscentre.org

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A happenstance culinary trip

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Vancouver is a wonderful city to visit. It is known for its mild weather, the vistas of the city, the mountains and the ocean, its parks, beaches and marvellous outdoor activities, to name a few attractions.

My husband and I were recently in Vancouver for the graduation of our youngest son, Warren, from the University of British Columbia's faculty of medicine. We are very proud of him and thrilled that after being away three years for undergrad and four years for medical school, he is finally returning to Toronto for his residency in internal medicine here at the University of Toronto.

When we visited Warren in Vancouver, we spent some time with him experiencing Vancouver's culinary side. We started by enjoying luscious cake at UBC Convocation Hall, overlooking the famous rose garden and the wonderful view of the ocean and the mountains. We discovered that Vancouver's dining scene is filled with restaurants that use local, seasonal and organic ingredients and offer quite a good selection of vegetarian and vegan options. One beautiful evening, we visited Seasons In The Park, a beautiful venue with an amazing view of downtown Vancouver and the mountains behind it.

There are abundant, wonderful farmer's markets – my favourite being Granville Island Public Market. Local markets showcase a fascinating assortment of colourful booths boasting fresh from the field organic and locally sourced produce, as well as fresh from the ocean fish and straight from the oven baked goods. The local Vancouver markets are also a perfect place to learn from the food artisans about how well you can eat if you buy local. Not to mention, a fantastic place to have lunch or snack a bit and purchase terrific gifts for family and friends.

Vancouver coffee is highly regarded as an art form. There are, of course, the major chains, like Starbucks, but many quaint and character-filled boutique coffee shops line Vancouver's streets as well.

Food trucks are wildly popular in Vancouver serving such favourites as grilled cheese, kebabs and tacos. Japadog sells Japanese-style hot dogs, with Japanese toppings. The hot dogs can be meat or vegetarian and the toppings include seaweed (nori), Japanese mayo, grated daikon (radish), bonito flakes (dried, fermented and smoked skipjack tuna), miso, Japanese coleslaw, plain shredded cabbage, terimayo sauce, (teriyaki sauce mixed with mayonnaise) and Japanese noodles.

If you have not experienced all that Vancouver has to offer, it's time to make plans to visit. Your eyes and your stomach will have an awesome time.

Vancouver 'Japadog'-style hot dogs

- ❑ 1 package hot dogs, beef, chicken or vegetarian
- ❑ 1 package hot dog buns, white or whole wheat
- ❑ 1 cup teriyaki glaze

Toppings

- ❑ terimayo sauce, recipe below
- ❑ 8 nori sheets, cut into small strips
- ❑ 6 green onions sliced
- ❑ 1 daikon radish or one bunch red radishes, grated
- ❑ 2 cups grated cabbage
- ❑ yakisoba noodles, recipe below
- ❑ sesame seeds
- ❑ plum sauce
- ❑ pickled ginger

Grill hot dogs on the barbecue or under the broiler. Brush hot dogs with the teriyaki glaze. Place each hot dog in a bun. Top with your choices of the remaining ingredients set out buffet style.

Terimayo Sauce

- ❑ 2 cups Miracle Whip Light
- ❑ 1/2 cup teriyaki sauce

Mix the Miracle Whip and teriyaki sauce together. Cover and refrigerate until needed.

Yakisoba noodles

- ❑ 2 (5.6-oz.) packages of yakisoba noodles
- ❑ 1/4 cup soy sauce
- ❑ 1 tbsp. white sugar
- ❑ 1/8 tsp. sriracha (hot chili) sauce
- ❑ 1/4 cup rice vinegar
- ❑ 1 tbsp. sesame oil,
- ❑ 1/4 cup water or broth
- ❑ 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- ❑ 1 small onion, vertically sliced
- ❑ 1 cup shredded cabbage

Follow package instructions to cook noodles.

Combine the soy sauce, sugar, sriracha sauce, rice vinegar, sesame oil and water in a small bowl and whisk to combine.

Heat the vegetable oil in a large pan or wok set to medium-high heat. Add the sliced onions and stir fry for 1 minute. Add the cabbage and cook for another 2 minutes until softened. Add the prepared yakisoba noodles and toss well.

Pour the sauce into the pan and toss to coat the noodles. Stir fry for 3 to 4 minutes until heated through. Serve hot. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 15, 2015

Dr. Joel Sadavoy: helping people cope with dementia

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The World Health Organization estimates that more than 47 million people are living with dementia worldwide, and that number is expected to reach 75 million by 2030. In Canada, more than 700,000 people have some form of dementia.

DementiaHack is a project supported by Facebook, the British, Canadian and Ontario governments that aims to help dementia sufferers and their caregivers by identifying "real-time immediate and tangible products and services…and turbocharg[ing] them to market," said DementiaHack chair Jordan Banks, managing director of Facebook Canada.

On Oct. 3, a workshop was held at the MaRS Discovery District in Toronto featuring a panel of researchers, caregivers and people living with dementia who gathered to share insights with technologists and developers. It was the lead-up to the DementiaHack Hackathon, a technology conference that takes place Nov. 7 to 9 at George Brown College in Toronto.

The CJN spoke with DementiaHack panelist Dr. Joel Sadavoy, director of the Reitman Centre for Alzheimer's Support and Training and head of the geriatric and community psychiatry programs at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital.

Dr. Joel Sadavoy

> *There's no cure for dementia. Medications might slow things down a little bit.*

What is dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term that refers to impairments in brain functioning that interfere with core mental abilities, particularly memory and the ability to understand and comprehend, to speak, and to carry out actions both simple and complex. The term encompasses a variety of specific illnesses, so there are different kinds of dementia. One of those is Alzheimer's disease, which is the largest component of dementia, but there are several others, such as vascular dementia, frontotemporal dementia, and Lewy body dementia. All have the same kinds of impact overall on these core functions of the brain. In addition, because of those changes, there are almost universally behavioural changes that occur, and while they're not considered core symptoms of dementia, they're so common they might as well be. However, they vary from person to person.

Why are you participating in DementiaHack?

I'm particularly interested in finding a way to enhance what goes on behind the scenes in people's homes, which is at the core of the difficulties they have in managing on a day-to-day basis. I am also fascinated by the idea that we can bring together perhaps hundreds of creative brains to address a topic that has remained very much in the shadows until relatively recently.

What kinds of therapy-based skills for caregivers are available?

Caregivers need accurate information and education, as well as practical services, respite care, in-home personal support workers, and aids of various sorts – which is where most of the resources, training and skill development for dealing with dementia go. We train practitioners to do this work, but we never train family caregivers, and they're the ones who have to deal with this. The most effective thing we have right now is interpersonal connection and interaction, which is what families do, and it's really one member of the family that has to do this more than others. Those people are untrained and not educated about the disease, and they don't quite know how to navigate the system to get the resources they need.

However, equally and often more so, they don't have the skill sets to address the problems that come up: the aggression, the paranoia, the wandering, the agitation, the resistance to taking medication or not having a shower. There is no or very little attention paid anywhere to the emotional needs of caregivers. If caregivers are not effective in this role, then it will cripple our health care system.

There are very few therapies in place to help these caregivers. There are support services and education programs, but education, we've found, is not the most important element. It is actually both skills training and emotional management – they are the two most important elements. For those to happen, they have to be quite specific to the needs of individual families and caregivers, because dementia looks different in one family versus another. The Reitman Centre is the only one place I know of that does that kind of systematic approach to skills training in problem-solving and sustaining emotional capacity in caregivers.

Is there treatment for dementia?

There's no cure for dementia. Medications might slow things down a little bit. Very occasionally, people will respond with some observable improvement, but that is unusual. Medications exist for the secondary effects of dementia – some people get depressed, some people get agitated, or paranoid, or psychotic, and they lose touch with reality. Sometimes the medications we have can be effective temporarily for those things, but there are lots of side effects, so we have to be very cautious about how we use them. Medication is really not the answer for dementia. We don't have a medication that I would say is substantially effective. The cognitive approaches are, I think, largely in the experimental stage.

You manage dementia. You understand the elements of it. The goal is really to maintain as much human engagement and interaction with somebody as possible. Dementia goes in stages. In the early stages, the relationship, communication and engagement are relatively normal. You can talk to somebody with early dementia and they make sense – they understand, and while there are some deficits in their abilities to do certain things, their personhood remains very much evident.

As the disease progresses, it eats away at individuals' core functions, and often at their personalities as well. Their ability to make themselves known, to communicate, and to maintain a relationship with others, starts to get damaged. As that happens, they require a different kind of engagement with the world. They can't do it by themselves any longer, so they need a partner. They're not going to partner fully with a personal support worker that comes in seven hours a week, so their partner in the management of dementia is going to be somebody close to them. Usually, that middle phase happens at home.

Treatment involves partnering with someone who can understand the needs of the patient and do things they can't do for themselves, as well as maintaining the relative health and activity and human engagement of the individual. This is much more than just chicken-soup support. It's actually very hard work, because the caregiver has to think for two at every turn: What's he going to eat? How is he going to eat? Can I get food? Can I get the medications into him? Does he need medication? Do I have to take him to the hospital? Is he sick? Does he need a shower? Does he have to go out? Should I take him to the doctor? What time should he go to bed? What time should he wake up?

Is dementia hereditary?

Partly. Genetics is not the most important thing, but there are some genes associated with dementia. We're searching a lot for genes in dementia, but we haven't really found convincing evidence that the majority of dementia is hereditary. Some kinds of dementia run in families, but it's a very small number. Perhaps five per cent of the dementias are hereditary, Alzheimer's disease in particular.

Are there tools for early identification, assessment and treatment?

We are much better at early identification than we are at doing anything about it. We can image the brain with PET scanning and functional MRI, and, increasingly, we can identify people who are at risk of getting dementia or who have it in the earliest stages. You can also identify them with psychological tests. Sometimes, just by doing an assessment on the basis of their functioning day-to-day, we can tell when things are starting to slip. Nevertheless, once we do that, we have very little to offer. Right now, what we're offering are lifestyle changes, recommendations for diet, exercise – all the things that are good for the heart you would also do to make the brain feel better.

It's thought that dementia probably starts 20 or 30 years before the disease actually becomes identifiable, and there are some factors that are probably related to various forms of dementia, such as blood flow problems, which may be amenable to lifestyle change. So keeping your blood pressure under control, keeping cholesterol low, exercising, eating one of those great diets like the Mediterranean diet – all those things are probably useful.

There may also be some use in tuning up the intellectual side of the brain. There is some data that the more highly educated people are, the more they're protected. I don't think it actually protects against getting the disease, but it may push the worst effects forward so that they emerge a bit later in life. I would say the most effective things are those things people really like to do. It is probable that novel social interactions of various sorts – where we are stretching our brains and engaging with people and thinking out of the box – are beneficial. That kind of creativity is probably a lot more effective than brain gyms or any other games, but I'd say if you love crosswords – do them. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Sam Factor's stunning victory

Backstory

ALLAN LEVINE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The results of the 42nd federal election will be known on Oct.19. Whether it will lead to a change in power in Ottawa remains to be seen.

Such a momentous change occurred in the 17th federal election on July 28, 1930, when as the Great Depression began, William Lyon Mackenzie King and the Liberals were swept from office by R.B. Bennett and the Conservatives.

For decades, Toronto had been solid Tory and it was expected that Conservative candidates would win in all nine Toronto-area ridings. On election day, that prediction came to pass, except in the riding of Toronto West Centre, which incorporated the Spadina and Kensington Market neighbourhood. Rather miraculously, Samuel Factor, a 37-year old Jewish lawyer who served on Toronto city council, defeated former Toronto mayor Tommy Church, who had been a member of Parliament since 1921. Factor won by 564 votes over Church and received 49 per cent of the vote. He was Ontario's first Jewish MP.

Toronto's Jewish population was about 45,000 in 1930 and many of those who lived in the Toronto West Centre riding no doubt voted for Factor, who spoke Yiddish and had a working-class background. Yet the post-election celebration was also an important moment for many of the city's immigrants.

The festivities carried on into the wee hours of the evening around College Street and Spadina Avenue. Factor stopped in to Rubin's restaurant and Wexler's Café and was greeted by adoring supporters. "Thousands of Jewish, non-Jewish and Italian voters created a dense traffic jam at Dundas and Bathurst Streets, when early returns showed Alderman Factor leading," reported the *Globe*. "When the returns showed that the alderman had won...the crowd broke down the door [of Factor's] committee room seized the alderman, shouldered him, and started down Dundas Street to the *Hebrew Journal*, where he made a brief address."

Factor had come to Toronto from czarist Russia in 1902 with his parents when he was 10 years old. He grew up in "the Ward," the downtown and impoverished immigrant quarter. He graduated high school from Jarvis Collegiate Institute and then studied law at Osgoode Hall as a scholarship student. In 1915, he became a lawyer during an era when Jews in the profession still faced discrimination. Two years later in the midst of World War I he left his law practice and enrolled in an officer training program becoming a lieutenant. He also later served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II.

His career as a politician began in 1923 with his election as a Toronto Board of Education school trustee. Three years after that he won a seat on city council for Ward 4, the Kensington Market neighbourhood; he served alongside Nathan Phillips, who was to become the city's first Jewish mayor in the civic election of 1954.

Church, meanwhile, was surprised but gracious in defeat (he won a by-election in 1934 and remained in Parliament until the 1950s).

Factor went on to serve as a MP for the next 15 years, winning in the new riding of Spadina in the 1935 election, when King and the Liberals were re-elected to power, and then again in the 1940 election. He worked with two other Jewish MPs, Sam Jacobs of Montreal and A.A. Heaps from Winnipeg, to lobby King to permit more German Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi rule to emigrate to Canada—yet to no avail. King considered appointing Factor to the cabinet in July 1940, until that idea met with resistance from his less tolerant Quebec colleagues.

In 1945, Factor graciously stepped aside so that David Croll, an Ontario Liberal MPP could run in Spadina. Croll served in the provincial cabinet, the first Jewish politician to do so in the country. Factor was appointed a judge and served with distinction on the Ontario bench for many years. A compassionate jurist, he believed that drug addicts should be sent to a hospital rather than jail, and urged the federal government to change the law.

He died in Toronto in 1962 at 69, still remembered for his stunning victory in the 1930 election. ■

Historian Allan Levine's most recent book is Toronto: Biography of a City.

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Rita Kolpakov	Sep 18/15	131 Torresdale Ave.
Aniela Tabak	Sep 22/15	377 Ridelle Ave.
Alan Cherry	Sep 21/15	77 Dunfield Ave.
Samuel Hoffman	Sep 21/15	211 Rosemary Rd.
David Spiro	Sep 21/15	30 Edgar Woods Rd.
Stanley Rosenthall	Sep 23/15	5 Wyegate Court
Sid Posner	Sep 22/15	65 Cocksfield Ave.
David Koifman	Sep 24/15	5444 Yonge St.
Harold Frankel	Sep 26/15	4003 Bayview Ave.
Lily Berk	Sep 24/15	205 Cummer Ave.
Cyla Fiksel	Sep 25/15	60 Disera Dr.

Alex Raab

entered into rest on September 16, 2015.

In the words of Mr. Rivlin, President of Israel: *"Alex was a fighter for whom the vision of Zionism and of Israel - the political liberation of the Jewish People - beat in his veins. His deep Zionist roots were planted many years ago, in the period of the establishment of Petach Tikva".*

There are innumerable causes, Universities, educational institutions, Hospitals and libraries that were beneficiaries of Alex and Jeannine's magnanimous donations.

Alex's generosity touched the lives of the IDF wounded soldiers and veterans, Israeli Agriculture, The Jabotinsky Institute, The Menachem Begin Heritage Centre, Aish Hatorah World Center Jerusalem, Michlalah Jerusalem, Hebrew University, The City of Atlit, Boystown Jerusalem and Ariel University.

We are confident that the achievements of Alex Raab will continue into the future. Our prayers are with the Raab Family, children and grandchildren.

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ELECTION COVERAGE

As *The CJN* went to press Monday, Canadians were heading to the polls. Visit cjnews.com for comprehensive coverage of the election results:

- **How did Jewish candidates fare?**
- **Who won in ridings with large Jewish populations?**
- **What is the Jewish community's reaction?**

Lech Lecha

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	5:59 p.m.	7:00 p.m.
Montreal	5:37 p.m.	6:39 p.m.
Ottawa	5:46 p.m.	6:48 p.m.
Toronto	6:03 p.m.	7:04 p.m.
Winnipeg	6:04 p.m.	7:10 p.m.
Calgary	6:09 p.m.	7:16 p.m.
Vancouver	5:49 p.m.	6:54 p.m.

A country on edge

As a wave of terror continues, Israel searches for a solution.

NEWS, ANALYSIS AND OPINION PAGES 6, 8, 29-35

Evaluating Rabin's legacy, 20 years on

Students to dialogue with each other in a universal lesson about acceptance, partnership. PAGE 7

Rooting for the Jays in the Holy Land

Canadian olim aren't shy when it comes to supporting their favourite team. PAGE 18

Sometimes it's kosher to be a ham

Old Jews Telling Jokes proves that humour is what binds our people together. PAGE 42

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Misunderstanding at Jays game, and graffiti artists express themselves

Jewish developers avoid ejection

Ex-Toronto Argonauts owner Howard Sokolowski and fellow Jewish property developer Ed Sonshine were nearly ejected from the Rogers Centre in Game 7 of the American League Division Series after Texas Rangers manager Jeff Banister said they tossed beer into the team's dugout. Banister mistakenly accused the pair during an unruly seventh inning in which fans tossed projectiles onto the field to protest a call against the Toronto Blue Jays that put them behind by a run. Sokolowski's wife, Sen. Linda Frum, tweeted Oct. 15 that after pleading their case in an exchange shown on national TV, police and stadium security let them stay.

Homeland hacked

Arabic-speaking artists hired to add Arabic graffiti to the set of the U.S. cable series *Homeland* said Oct. 14 they'd "hacked" the Oct. 11 episode by calling the show racist in the scrawls. The artists said in an online posting that the series is known as "the most bigoted show on television for its inaccurate, undifferentiated and highly biased depiction of Arabs, Pakistanis and Afghans, as well as its gross misrepresentations of the cities of Beirut, Islamabad and the so-called Muslim world in general." In the episode, central character Carrie Mathison, played by Claire Danes, walks through a Syrian refugee camp built in a Berlin set, past Arabic graffiti with messages such as "*Homeland* is racist" and "*Homeland* is a joke, and it didn't make us laugh." *Homeland* is based on the Israeli series *Hatufim* (*Prisoners of War*). Both were created by Gideon Raff.

"We didn't throw that beer." TWITTER PHOTO

Raising the bar in Tel Aviv

A leading publication on alcohol ranked an Israeli pub on its list of the world's 50 best bars for the first time. *Drink International* put Tel Aviv's Imperial Craft Cocktail Bar at No. 17 on its list, published earlier this month. The same bar, on Hayarkon Street in central Tel Aviv near the U.S. Embassy, was already ranked last year by *Drinks International* as the best in Africa and the Middle East, but ranked 56th on the worldwide list. This year, it retained its regional title and completed the biggest jump of all the establishments ranked, *Ha'aretz* reported. ■

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTO BY HADAS PARUSH/FLASH90

Gematria

7

The number of Jewish Playmates known to have posed nude in *Playboy* magazine since its founding in 1953. Starting in March, the magazine will no longer have nude models.

8,000

The number of requests for gun permits received Oct. 15 by Israel's Public Security Ministry, which usually gets 150 to 200 a day.

Quotable

Judaism represented for Emil a profound valuable and beautiful phenomenon that is part of... coming up with a better world.

— Prof. Frederick Krantz on the late philosopher Emil Fackenheim. **See p. 54.**

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Been asked to give a dvar Torah? Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz has you covered with online parshat hashavuah resources.

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Letters to the Editor

Mixed feelings about refugees

I imagine I am not alone in having conflicted feelings.

For ages, many democratic governments have supported tyrants because they were on our side and/or they kept order in their countries. While, in principle, I was pleased that the likes of Moammar Gadhafi and Saddam Hussein were executed for their crimes, among the very few modern tyrants who have received justice, two things are evident. One is that Libya and Iraq are failed states right now, and many of their people have one thing in common: an irrational hatred of Israel, if not Jews.

So, with the exception of Iraqi Kurds, it is hard to have sympathy for the population of many of these countries.

That brings us to Syria, where President Bashar Assad, along with his father, has killed more Muslims than Jews have since the beginning of time. His opponents in the uncivil civil war include Al Qaeda and ISIS, among the savage Islamist groups who also despise Israel and Jews. Again, there are no good guys here, except maybe the Kurds, who are far more worthy of statehood and justice than the Palestinians, but are ignored by the world.

Now Europe is being flooded by refugees from failed states. Yet in Canada, we hear only about helping the Syrians, who must certainly include Jew-haters (I prefer this accurate term to the "anti-Semitic" euphemism).

My synagogue, Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom in Montreal, will sponsor a Syrian family. I mildly approve, but I am conflicted. But I believe the best attitude was revealed in *The CJN* story "Mindful of risks, Europe's Jews urge aid to refugees" (Sept. 17). In it, Rabbi Zoltan Radnoti of Hungary stated that he actively helps the refugees, knowing that he may be aiding people who may hurt other Jews in Europe, or who may have fired on Israeli soldiers or would have done so in a heartbeat.

Then he states the key to it all. "I know. But I am duty-bound to help."

God bless him! He is both an inspiration and a better Jew than I.

Ken Frankel
Montreal

Niqab hinders communication

I couldn't disagree more with Danielle Kubes ("When it comes to the niqab debate, where are the Jews?" Oct. 8). The niqab uniquely hides all messages related to emotion, mental well-being, personality and mood.

It's not fear that drives our resistance and mistrust of the niqab, it's millions of years of evolution. Neither turbans nor kippot nor wigs worn by some married Jewish women cover that essential and unique form of communication which is the human face.

Elan Beer
Thornhill, Ont.

Catholic-Jewish friendships

It was with great pleasure that I read Rev. Damian MacPherson's guest column on the impending 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* ("Jews and Catholics: a pilgrimage to partnership," Oct. 8).

The changes wrought by *Nostra Aetate* constitute, to borrow a portion of the title of Gilbert Rosenthal's excellent book, a truly Copernican Revolution. I have personally witnessed some of these changes.

I have a powerfully strong recollection of how, at the age of eight or nine, my best friend showed me his workbook in which he and others in his class at the local Catholic school were taught that the Jews killed Jesus. It didn't have much effect on either one of us, but it was a rough neighbourhood, and being labelled as a Christ-killer didn't help. Getting beaten up on the way home from school was already a regular occurrence.

This sort of Catholic-on-Jewish bullying simply doesn't happen anymore. Or if it does, it elicits a strong response from both communities. In the space of 50 years, well within my lifetime, we've gone from systemic anti-Semitism within the Roman Catholic Church to greater understanding and friendship. Of course, no relationship is without its bumps, but look how far we have come.

Majestic documents such as *Nostra Aetate* have acted as fundamental game-changers in Catholic-Jewish relations and it is from within this relatively new tradition that successive popes have built and broadened the bridge between our two communities. Such changes leave me, without minimizing present challenges and difficulties, hopeful for the future of our relationship with other communities as well.

Len Rudner
Toronto

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We reserve the right to edit and condense letters which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.

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RABBI·2·RABBI

Talking theology in a house of God

Are there measures communities can take to encourage this conversation? And if we can't discuss belief in synagogue, where can it be discussed?

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Cutler: Recently, a congregant emailed me Maimonides' *Thirteen Principles of Faith*, and asked if I agreed with all of them. I replied in one word, "no." Similarly, I recently met with a woman and her Jewish partner regarding her interest in conversion to Judaism. Before concluding the meeting, the boyfriend asked me a series of questions about my beliefs regarding the age of the world, the origin of the Torah and the existence of God.

These moments stand out for me, because I am so rarely asked about my personal beliefs regarding fundamental religious issues. These incidents forced me to question the extent to which a rabbi's theology is important for his or her community.

Rabbis are evaluated by many criteria. Perhaps for a rabbi who is strong on many fronts – pastoral, preaching, teaching, etc – theology is simply not an important criteria for evaluation. Or are we not inviting the conversation? Are we not open about our core beliefs, fearing that we will seem out of touch or maybe too radical?

How do you share your fundamental beliefs with your community? Do you worry that you may offend or push away congregants who hold a different truth?

Rabbi Scheier: It is true that our sermons and teachings focus more on how to be "God-like" than on how to be "God-believing."

Maimonides' influence on Jewish thought brought dogma to the fore. In fact, the Talmud does not record a comprehensive list of Jewish principles. It was Maimonides who insisted that agreeing with principles of belief are a prerequisite to being a member of the community. The irony you point out holds true: in all of the ways that congregations often grill potential rabbinic candidates, belief is rarely addressed.

I am reminded of the joke about the shul-going atheist who is asked why he attends synagogue. The atheist points to a religious Jew, Garfinkel. "You see Garfinkel?" he says. "Garfinkel comes to talk to God. I come to talk to Garfinkel."

That said, I don't shy away from speaking about God. I am aware that conversations about theology may be foreign turf for many of our members, but if we can't discuss theology in synagogue, where can it be discussed?

Do you think there are measures communities can take to encourage this conversation?

Rabbi Cutler: I am now beginning my third year leading Havurat HaSefer, a modern Jewish philosophy reading group. At its best, this group, which meets every three weeks, not only reads and discusses great works, but also takes the opportunity to reflect upon them. I try to lead by example, not only serving as an explicator of text, but by speaking openly as a Jew whose theology is in flux.

I wonder if we created a safe space with excellent facilitators over a course of months or years whether we could empower a cadre of deep religious reflectors. For me, it would seem that it would have to be clear from the outset that no ideas are too foreign, no suggestions too radical. Facilitators would have to be knowledgeable enough to guide participants to thinkers whose ideas resemble their own. Rabbis would have to be comfortable enough to suggest books that may fall outside the stances of their own denominations (if not Judaism entirely).

How would you go about devising conversations on foundational issues of Jewish belief?

Rabbi Scheier: I think you are right that one begins discussing faith by exploring texts.

In the past, I have taught a class on belief using the text *The God I Believe In*, a 1994 book by Joshua Haberman that invited 14 prominent Jewish figures to pontificate about belief. I wonder if it might be a worthwhile project for our Canadian community to produce a similar volume, one that would explore the inner spiritual workings of our community's spiritual, political and cultural leaders.

My wife, Maharat Abby Brown Scheier, often teaches that Jewish faith doesn't address the present, it points to the future. To be a believing Jew means to believe that the future will be better. This idea stands behind the concept of the Messiah, and it is what motivates so much of what we do as rabbis and as a community. ■

How to reach us

Vol. XLV, No. 41 (2,217)*

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Subscription inquiries: 416-932-5095
Toll Free: 1-866-849-0864 **Fax:** 416-932-2488
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Sales, National & Toronto Local: Canadian Primedia, 416-922-3605

Israeli Advertising Representative:
IMP, Tel: 02-625-2933 E-mail: info@impmedia.co.il

Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation,
July 14, 2015

Postmaster: Please return 2985 and changes of address to CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7
Postage Paid at Toronto Canada Post Publication Agreement #40010684
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage

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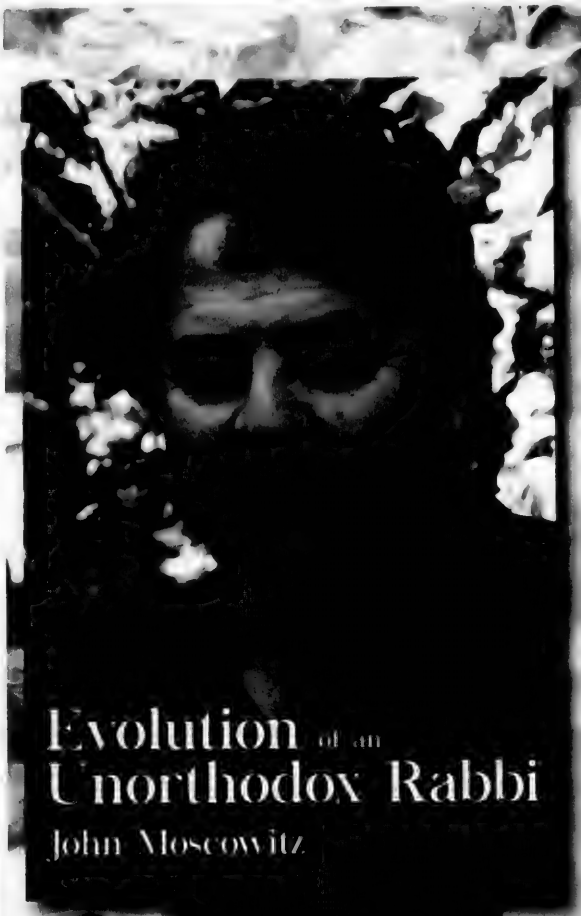

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2015
7:30P.M.

Rabbis John Moscowitz and Aaron Flanzraich in conversation about *Evolution of an Unorthodox Rabbi*

PHOTO CREDIT: RIR BARABTAR — THE TOWER

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Publisher and Proprietor The Canadian Jewish News, a corporation without share capital. Head Office 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord Ont. L4K 2L7

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From the Archives | Postwar refugees

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS CC NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The first group of post-World War II Jewish war orphans, seen here in a London train station, arrived in Canada in September 1947, under the auspices of the Refugee Youth Project sponsored by Canadian Jewish Congress. (They continued to arrive until March 1952, finally totalling more than 1,000.)

SeeJN | Times Square rally

AMIR LEVY/FLASH90 PHOTO

Pro-Israel demonstrators chant slogans and hold up signs to express their support for Israel in New York's Times Square, Oct. 18.

From Yoni's Desk

In Israel, terror and frustration abound

Last Thursday, a Jerusalem resident posted a photo of an empty park on Facebook. The accompanying caption read: "This is a park in a very safe and 'comfortable' neighbourhood where I usually take my boys after work. On a normal day at 430 pm [sic] the park is PACKED with kids and parents. Look at it!!!!! people are scared to take their kids to a park in Talbia!!!!!"

Such is life in Israel right now, where every day brings new terror attacks against Jews. As the knife assaults and shooting sprees continue, it's hard to feel safe. More and more Israelis are carrying pepper spray or mace, or packing a gun when they're out and about, just in case.

It is a terrifying situation, and also a frustrating one, since there appears to be no solution in sight. Thousands more soldiers and security personnel have been deployed to the streets, bus stops, shopping malls and Israel's borders. Temporary walls have been installed, dividing Jerusalem's Jewish and Arab neighbourhoods. And yet, most experts agree there is little hope this latest wave of terror will end anytime soon.

The genesis of the violence is rooted in a bald-faced lie – Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' assertion, despite all evidence to the contrary and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's public insistence, that the Israeli government is attempting to change the status quo on the Temple Mount. Abbas has shown no shame in piling lies on top of lies, including his malicious claim that Israeli security personnel shot and killed an innocent Palestinian boy. In fact, 13-year-old Ahmed Mansra had stabbed and critically injured two Israelis, one of them a boy of nearly the same age as him, before he could be stopped. Mansra wasn't dead, either – photos showed him recovering in an Israeli hospital from a head injury.

It's hard to see how anyone could be deceived by such blatant fraud, and yet many have been, including some media outlets, our own Canadian Broadcasting Corporation among them. From headlines that suggest ruthless Israelis are murdering innocent Palestinians, to inaccurate on-the-scene coverage from reporters who should know better, it's difficult to understand how so many obvious journalistic mistakes could be committed. It almost makes you wonder whether some of those spreading these lies in the media are doing it on purpose.

But what can Israel do? There is no one to talk to about peace on the Palestinian side, and no clear method to curtail the violence, at least not yet. In the meantime, sales of pepper spray, tear gas and handguns are on the rise. It may not be a solution, but it's the best anyone has been able to come up with so far.

The CJN went to press Monday afternoon as Canadians headed to the polls. The timing is indeed unfortunate, but it does give us an opportunity to point you toward our newly redesigned online home, launching this week at cjnews.com. Visit *The CJN*'s completely redeveloped website for comprehensive coverage of the election results and how they affect the Jewish community. And, of course, we'll have much to say about the election in next week's print edition. ■ — YONI

Essay

Realizing Yitzhak Rabin's vision

DJ Schneeweiss
and **Lior Hameiri**

Nov. 4 marks the 20th anniversary of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's former prime minister, by a fellow Israeli Jew, Yigal Amir.

This is a difficult day for all Israelis.

Against the background of the bitter ideological divide that both preceded the assassination, and followed it, this is a day which forces us to ask ourselves deep questions about what kind of society we are and want to be, and how we realize our national dreams when there is no consensus as to how to do so, or even as to what they are.

For many, this is a day which requires that we renew our commitment to peace between Israel and its neighbours.

This we do, wholeheartedly. Despite the hostility and the terror and the incitement and the hatred, despite the rockets and the tunnels and the denial of our connection to Jerusalem, the search for a peace that will guarantee the security and prosperity of the Jewish state Rabin clearly loved remains at the heart of our national agenda and of our people's yearning.

But there are other crucial lessons to be learned as well, including the need to stand vigilant against incitement, hatred and intolerance, and the violence these excesses so easily beget.

As we look back over the 20 years since that wrenching Saturday night, there is much to be proud of in the way Israeli society has dealt with the wounds, in the way we collectively pulled back from the brink and rebuilt our social and political contract.

Profound efforts have been made, by the government and by civil society, to ensure that this anniversary is a time which fosters unity. Official ceremonies are held and educational programs conducted in schools. People of different viewpoints come together to remember and reaffirm, to mourn and to sing, to listen and to learn.

Students light candles at the Rabin Memorial during the 10th anniversary of his assassination in 2005. Rabin was assassinated on Nov. 4, 1995. FILE PHOTO

We understand that we don't have to reach agreement on everything in order to work together to advance our country and our society, and we know that we must foster tolerance and mutual respect always, even – and particularly – when we disagree over fundamental issues.

Here in Toronto, the Israeli Consulate together with the Israel Engagement Committee of UJA Federation have initiated a project to promote these values of acceptance and partnership. Building on the work of the Gesher movement in Israel, we are working to create opportunities for *mifgash* – encounters between Jewish schools here in the city.

Next week, Grade 8 students from Jewish elementary schools from different religious/ideological streams will meet – most for the first time in their lives - in "dialogue tents" specially set up so that they can become acquainted with each other and learn about each other's views on matters of mutual interest.

Twenty-four young Israeli emissaries – *shinshinim* – embedded in the community through the UJA's Israel Engagement committee's work will facilitate these discussions.

None of these young Israelis ever knew Rabin or saw him in person, or experienced the feelings and emotions which engulfed us after the assassination. It is therefore particularly moving and inspiring to see them take on the responsibilities of bearing the torch of collective memory and collective purpose, so that our people can continue to learn from our past, as we build our future.

Why use the Rabin anniversary to foster this internal Jewish dialogue here in Toronto? We believe there are two compelling reasons:

Firstly, because this community can be deeply enriched by connecting with the dilemmas and challenges that Israelis face as we seek to build a democratic and Jewish society which lives up to our people's best aspirations. Just as we do with the official Memorial Ceremony for Yom Hazikaron and many other educational initiatives and events in the community calendar, we believe it is important to make Israeli life and reality as accessible and intelligible as possible to the Jewish community as a whole.

And secondly, because the lessons of this tragedy apply not just to Israelis, but to all Jews.

There is no "mine" or "yours" here. Israel doesn't only belong to Israelis, it belongs to the entire Jewish people. Even though our lives are often very different, we are one, and our need to allow for difference among us - the same.

It is our hope that this student dialogue initiative will become a permanent fixture in the community calendar and a model for even more engagement with Israel.

The new generation and the old, left and right, Israelis and Jews – all of us must work together to promote the unity of the Jewish people irrespective of which passports we travel on or which political platform we subscribe to, or which school we send our kids to. We must all work as one to promote tolerance and acceptance of those among us with whom we disagree, to enhance our own personal involvement and engagement with Israel and to help it to become the just, secure and peaceful society that we all yearn for.

If we act together, then the coming generations who may not have known Rabin will at least be able to enjoy the realization of his vision. ■

DJ Schneeweiss is Israel's Consul General of Israel for Toronto and Western Canada. Lior Hameiri is the director of UJA Federation's Israel Engagement Program.

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Israel is on edge – again

Sagi Melamed

"Mom freaked me out this morning!" said my 16-year-old son Ari. "I was leaving for school, half-asleep as usual, and Mom was just coming home after her morning run. Suddenly she yelled, 'Ari, look out!' I jumped out of my skin, thinking a terrorist with a knife was in our doorway… then I realized it was just my little sister's cat trying to sneak into the house."

My friend Shmulik told me on Shabbat, "Yesterday I reviewed the techniques you taught us in karate class to defend myself against a knife attack, after rocks were thrown on the street in Haifa where my office is." Near the cafeteria at Yezreel Valley College I met R., an Israeli Arab employee from a small village near Afula. I asked, "What do you think is going to happen?" With a concerned look he said, "Wallah, I don't know. Our village is as supportive of coexistence as you could imagine. We serve in the IDF [R. himself was in the Golani Brigade], we're integrated and we feel part of the fabric of Israeli society. But now we're scared some Jews from Afula will attack us in revenge for the two stabbing attacks by Arabs because they won't distinguish between good people and evil."

Right now the nerves of Israelis are stretched to their limit. In every town, on every corner, young Arabs are attacking Jews – mostly with knives, but also with firebombs and guns – and the violence is liable to escalate.

Again there's a cycle of violence. Again the question: is this the third intifada? Again, there's pressure on the government and army to find new means to suppress the terror attacks. Again, everyone knows those means are just a temporary Band-Aid on a deep, festering wound and not a true solution.

At times like these, it's easy to slip into extremism, whether despair and fantasies of immigrating to the promised city of Berlin, or primal fear, hatred or illusions of panaceas.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

Police and emergency crews respond after a terror attack at a Jerusalem bus station on Oct. 14. Right now the nerves of Israelis are stretched to the limit, *CJN* columnist Sagi Melamed writes.

FLASH 90 PHOTO

Jewish groups express support for Israel

PAUL LUNGEN
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As Israelis continued to be victimized by terrorist attacks on a daily basis, Canadian Jews gathered in synagogues to pray for the wounded while Jewish organizations suggested a number of practical steps that people could take to show support for Israel.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) called on its supporters to "take action against terrorism" by participating in a five-point suite of activities, including voicing their concerns to Canadian political leaders and letting Israeli leaders know they stand in solidarity with the people of Israel.

In Toronto, UJA Federation announced it was expanding a solidarity mission scheduled for Oct. 19 as well as its participation at a Keren Hayesod meeting in Jerusalem this week. UJA Federation also stated it was advancing $120,000 to the Jewish Agency for Israel's Victims of Terror Fund to assist those attacked in Israel as well as their families.

In Montreal, Federation CJA expressed its solidarity "with our brothers and sisters in Israel. We are planning a community-wide town hall meeting the first week of November and are in the process of securing top speakers for a panel on the current situation in Israel."

Late last week, a group of rabbis affiliated with the Canadian Rabbinic Caucus travelled to Ottawa to present representatives of the Palestinian Authority with a letter asking that the Palestinian government cease the incitement that has led to the violence.

The situation in Israel prompted a statement from Defence Minister Jason Kenney, who said: "Canada condemns in the strongest terms possible the recent wave of terror attacks against Israeli civilians that has resulted in a number of tragic deaths and injuries. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of the victims.

"There can be no justification for these attacks, and we will continue to oppose efforts undermine Israel's legitimacy or right to defend herself in the face of terror."

As the Israeli death toll grew, CIJA urged Canadians take several steps in solidarity with the victims. It suggested Canadians email UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the PA diplomatic representative in Canada "to condemn Palestinian terrorism and demand action against Palestinian incitement."

It urged people to sign its petition, which calls on the government of Canada to reaffirm its desire for peace by declaring that Canadian financial support for the Palestinian Authority depends on the PA taking certain actions.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

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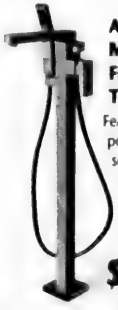

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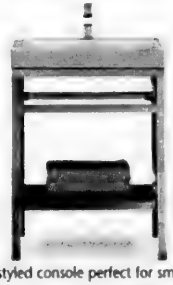

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Don't let Palestinian terrorism scare you away from Israel

Gil Troy

As what the British newspaper the *Independent* outrageously calls a "spate of alleged Palestinian stabbings" against, I guess, "alleged" Jewish victims "allegedly" mounts, Israel's real friends must step in. There are four essential ways to support Israel now. First, defend Israel in the media and online. Second, lobby to ensure ongoing governmental friendship for Israel. Third, speak informally about your love of Israel to friends. And fourth, plan that first or return visit to Israel. Don't let evil win. Don't let Palestinian terrorism scare you from Israel – or cloud your Zionist dreams.

There is a worldwide propaganda war against Israel, with essential battlefields in the media, online and in the universities. People should know their basic maps and facts. They should know how often Israel has offered to compromise, how former U.S. president Bill Clinton blamed former PA president Yasser Arafat for the Oslo peace process's derailment in 2001, when the Palestinians turned away from the best chance for peace and returned to the ugliest form of suicide-bombing terrorism.

In my new book *The Age of Clinton*, I tell a story everyone should know, that in their final White House meeting, when Arafat tried charming the president by calling him a "great man," Clinton shouted: "I am not a great man. I am a failure. And you have made me one." Clinton wanted Arafat to agree to Israel's historic concessions at Camp David in 2000. The aging terrorist, cast by Clinton to be Nelson Mandela, ultimately was Yasser Arafat. That story reflects the broader story of the Palestinian approach to Israeli and American concessions – demanding more, then still rejecting compromise. These and other facts showing Palestinian rejectionism must be publicized.

Love him or hate him domestically, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has been a true friend to Israel. During this campaign, each major party leader professed support for Israel. Canada's friendship with Israel must stay strong, whatever form the next government takes. All Canadian citizens must insist that their representatives support Canada's sister democracy in the Middle East.

While lobbying legislators, don't make Israel your secret affair. Jewish and non-Jewish friends need to hear about your passion, your fears, and your love for Israelis and for Israel. Too often, in this age of slacktivism, we whip fellow Israel supporters into a pro-Israel frenzy by forwarding pro-Israel articles or posts to one another and making ourselves feel good. Virtual support is important, but genuine outreach remains the real thing. Having people transfer their affection for you to the Jewish state, or at least become more respectful and acknowledge complexity during a media pile-on against Israel, is essential.

Finally, remember the equation "2DW = 1IL" – two trips to Disney World equal one trip to Israel. Now is the time to go to Israel, to enjoy, to see that life continues, and by going, to help life continue. The organized Jewish community should encourage Israel tours, absorbing the extra security costs so everyone feels extra protected, even if millions wander the streets of Israel safely every day, without such protection.

And given that for so many people, a trip to Israel might be the budget-busting trip of the decade or a lifetime, and given their justifiable concern that precisely the day they go, the situation might deteriorate, the Jewish community should also create a special travel insurance plan to cover last-minute Israel trip cancellations. If every Jew chipped in $5 or $10, it would more than cover such special insurance, and leave some left over to send some lucky people on a trip via Birthright or any other legitimate, fun and inspiring Israel program.

So stop the hand-wringing and start acting. The time to help Israel has arrived. And the time to enjoy Israel in all its glory and complexity has arrived, too. ■

Between the crosses: memory and forgetting

Sara Horowitz

For Canadians, the Jewish and Gregorian calendars resonate together in early November. The leaves turn and fall, leaving bare branches that point to the dead of winter ahead. Past the flush of Jewish festivals, of *zman simchateinu*, the time of our joy, is the Hebrew month so devoid of celebration that we call it *Mar Cheshvan*, bitter Cheshvan. We engage with Holocaust Education Week, as poppies pinned to our lapels mark the sacrifice of fallen soldiers in both great wars. Kristallnacht – or the November Pogrom – is followed immediately by Remembrance Day. It is the season of sober remembrance.

Although the red poppy of remembrance is ubiquitous, it is an odd symbol with contradictory associations – memory and forgetting, death and redemption. The practice of wearing the poppy derives, of course, from the wartime poem *In Flanders Fields*, composed in 1915 by Maj. John McCrae, a Canadian doctor from Guelph, for the funeral of a fellow soldier.

The poem begins in nature, famously observing, "In Flanders fields the poppies blow." The pitched battle in Flanders so ravaged the soil that little but the hardy poppy could grow. The red poppies proliferating there symbolize both the blood of fallen soldiers and the regeneration of life in a wasteland. They link up with an older Christian use of the poppy as an emblem for the bleeding wounds, death and resurrection of Jesus, and also with the sleep-inducing, memory-erasing death-like properties of opium, sourced from poppies. The poet Paul Celan, a survivor of Auschwitz, evokes these contradictory meanings in the title of his 1952 collections of poems, *Mohn und Gedächtnis*, or *Poppy and Remembrance*.

I thought of this odd conflation of memory and forgetting when my husband and I visited the beaches of northern France last June, the week of D-Day. Even on a balmy spring morning, the conditions were harsh, and we imagined the treacherous Normandy landing of the Allied troops in the 1944 invasion, whose staggering losses were a given.

After Juno and Omaha beaches, we visited the Canadian and U.S. military cemeteries. At the U.S. cemetery, we saw seemingly infinite rows of white crosses. The side facing forward, toward the cemetery entrance, was blank. Inscribed on the back of each cross was the name of the dead and a few other details. The uniformity in death mirrored the uniformity of the military uniform when alive. Individuals lost their lives, but in death they were remembered as a unit, defending shared goals, ideals and values. Scattered among the crosses, barely discernible visually, were markers bearing a Magen David, perched upon what served for the other graves as the vertical post of the cross.

In the Canadian cemetery, graves were marked by traditional arc-shaped white gravestones, each inscribed with the name of the soldier and other details. There was a space in which – for most graves – was etched a cross. A small number of gravestones had a Magen David instead, and an even smaller number, simply a blank space.

The American and the Canadian cemeteries based these religious designations on the identity tags of the fallen soldiers. In the American cemetery, the default designation was Christian. Only if a soldier's dog tags explicitly identified him as Jewish would he be buried under a Magen David. Our guide noted that many Jewish soldiers were buried beneath the sign of the cross. Often, soldiers did not indicate their religion on their dog tags, in case of capture by Nazi forces. "In Flanders fields the poppies blow/ Between the crosses, row on row." In the Canadian cemetery, by contrast, when the religion of the fallen soldier was not specified, the space on the gravestone was left blank.

Without conferring, my husband and I began placing small stones on the Jewish graves. In each cemetery, we walked between rows of grave markers, bringing Jewish ritual to the final resting place of known Jewish soldiers, far from the home and family they died defending. ■

The Jewish left's political agenda

Michael Taube

There are moments when I feel this column could be solely used as a vehicle to refute left-wing Jewish criticism of the Tories.

The temptation regularly exists to critique centrist/progressive commentators who claim to understand what Stephen Harper and the Tories are up to. They often present imaginary scenarios to illustrate how the government, in their mind, has conned the community for political and financial support.

During the federal election, some Jews were angered by the political strategies of Tory MPs Mark Adler (some of his campaign posters included the words "son of a Holocaust survivor") and Joyce Bateman (who criticized some Liberal candidates/supporters for their views on Israel during an all-candidates' meeting).

They were furious with Tory candidate Robert Libman, too. It was widely reported that a campaign worker tapped a mezuzah at a constituent's door and said, "OK, but remember who you are."

So, they lashed out.

Andrew Cohen's Sept. 23 *Ottawa Citizen* column, for instance, claimed Defence Minister Jason Kenney resembled a "minister of the Jews," and remembered a time "when Jews in this country, in their politics, were less parochial."

The author also threw in this little gem for good measure: "No one can say that the Conservatives have not worked for the support they are said to enjoy among most of Canada's 330,000 Jews. It's not just their loyalty to the State of Israel. It's dropping a little gelt here and there, like a cheque from Pierre Poilievre for $120,000 for the Soloway Jewish Community Centre in Ottawa. Its swimming pool's dehumidification system needed repair, surely one of Canada's urgent infrastructure challenges."

In Cohen's view, "many Canadian Jews have become one-issue voters. Whatever alienates two-thirds of Canadians from the government scarcely registers with them. It is about Israel, all the time, and Harper is the Lion of Judah."

Former Canadian Jewish Congress CEO Benjamin Shinewald's Oct. 9 *Globe and Mail* opinion piece followed a similar pattern. He claimed: "Canadian Jews increasingly believe that the Conservatives' policy on Israel was never entirely about Israel. Rather, it was about driving a wedge into their community and cementing those on the Conservative side of the divide into Stephen Harper's political base."

While recognizing "large numbers of Canadian Jews remain resolutely Conservative," he felt the "Tory message is wearing on some." He went on, "And, like all Canadians, Jewish voters are generally motivated by a complex bundle of political imperatives, not just one. Neglected in the past, Jews now wonder if they are being used."

Cohen and Shinewald are entitled to their opinions. Alas, the perceived reality they described is pure fantasy. As I've written before, most Jews aren't single-issue voters. When this community finally dropped the embarrassing charade of acting like a left-wing monolith, many embraced political and economic conservatism. They support important measures such as lower taxes, fiscal prudence, less government interference and strong foreign policy positions. They're comfortable with, and not fearful of, most Tory policies.

Contrary to popular belief, Israel plays a minor, and not a major, role in Jewish Canadian voting patterns. A few candidates aside, it wasn't used as a wedge issue by the Tories, or a "divide and conquer" strategy to tear apart the community. It's a myth to say otherwise, and the political left knows it.

Meanwhile, Jewish voters weren't used as political pawns during the federal election. Most sensible individuals realize this. Sure, there are strategic reasons to use specific language and techniques with ethnic and religious communities. The Tories do this, and so do the Liberals, NDP, Greens and others. That's politics, folks.

The fact that some overly sensitive left-wing Jews can't handle this community's political shift is both unfortunate and predictable. When they start embellishing details or puffing up stories that only represent a fraction of the community, that's bloody offensive. ■

Bound by our history

Bernie Farber

Just prior to World War II, a young man from a small Polish village saw what many others refused to see – the real possibility of a war in which Jews would be targeted by the Nazi regime.

Wanting to live, he took matters into his own hands. Through stealth and luck he managed to make his way to Gdansk, and stowed away on a boat headed to the United States.

Velvel Farber, my father's older brother, made it across the Atlantic. However, like many others before him, he was apprehended upon arrival and was returned to Poland. Velvel was murdered in the gas chambers of Treblinka in 1943.

Canada was no better than the United States prior to the war, turning away frantic refugees who came within miles of our shores. The 1938 story of the MS St. Louis, with its boatload of Jews mostly from Germany is just one harrowing example. Following the Cuban nullification of their transit visas, neither Canada nor the United States welcomed them and they were all returned to Europe where hundreds perished in Nazi death camps.

I come, therefore, to the issue of refugees bound by a history that speaks to callousness of democratic governments, racism and ultimate despair.

Today another refugee crisis, not seen since the ominous days of Velvel Farber and the passengers aboard the MS St Louis, has erupted onto the world's stage.

Canada must respond to the Syrian refugee crisis and move beyond hesitation and fear to help those escaping war in Syria. Like many immigrants before, whom today make up much of Canada's population, people arriving from Syria can make a rich contribution to Canadian society. Although the current government has pledged to match Canadian donations up to $100 million, Canada can do more.

The crisis facing us today is complex with no simple solution. However, it is one that compels a meaningful response. The Mosaic Institute, where I have recently been appointed executive director, is assembling qualified Canadians to help advise on such a response.

> *Canada must respond to the Syrian refugee crisis and move beyond hesitation and fear*

Canada has had a long history as a promoter of peace around the world. In my work both with the Canadian Jewish community and other communities, I have long believed in the need to engage in respectful dialogue and the vital need for good research on immigration patterns and resultant integration of newcomers to Canada.

The fact that the Mosaic Institute engages in this work was a key factor in my decision to accept the appointment. With the establishment of the "Humanity Wins" committee, chaired by Ron Atkey – former immigration minister in Joe Clark's Conservative government and former chair of Canada's Security, Intelligence and Review Committee – we have begun a process of dialogue and action to articulate a Canadian response to the Syrian refugee crisis. Committee members such as Ed Broadbent, Norman Inkster, Louise Arbour, Hind Kabawat, and Atom Egoyan are just a sampling of those who have signed on to help.

The "Humanity Wins" committee has made three strategic recommendations to the government for consideration:

- Improve access by sending Canadian visa officials to refugee camps.
- Speed up the process by streamlining the forms, rules and regulations to move Syrian refugees here quickly.
- Contribute to a political solution by supporting the development of a sustainable and meaningful political response to the conflict in Syria.

A political solution will require both diplomatic and community-based efforts, both of which require an active role from the Canadian government. This could include convening political leaders in the region, facilitating peace talks, consulting with civil society leaders and with Canadians of Syrian background, and so on.

In memory of the victims of Canada's history of closed borders, the immediate action of beginning the process of refugee resettlement and peace building would speak well to Canada's reputation for leadership in trying times. ■

News

Political differences among Jews aren't new, observers say

PAUL LUNGEN
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It's funny. On the national stage, Canada's relationship with Israel – and which party is best positioned to maintain it – barely became an issue. In interviews with *The CJN* in our last issue, each of the party leaders proclaimed their support for Israel, for a negotiated peace agreement with the Palestinians and their opposition to the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement.

Yet on the campaign trail, in a few select ridings where the Jewish vote might make a difference, candidates traded barbs over which party can best be trusted to have Israel's back. The Conservatives referred to their record of backing the Jewish state when times got tough, and when it wasn't necessarily a popular position to take. Liberal and New Democratic candidates in Mount Royal, Eglinton-Lawrence, York Centre and Thornhill, among other ridings, argued there is barely any daylight between the parties' positions on Israel.

Tory candidates pointed to some Liberal candidates' problematic position on Israel and noted how in the past, the Liberals hadn't always voted for Israel at the UN. Liberal candidates responded that the Tories ought not make Israel "a wedge issue."

Other issues have divided Jewish voters, including refugee policy and whether Muslim women should remove the niqab when taking the oath of citizenship.

At one point in the campaign, a small group of protesters, organized by the Jewish Defence League, gathered outside the Toronto home of Honey and Barry Sherman as they hosted Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau in a fundraiser for the party and for York Centre candidate Michael Levitt. They were protesting what they called the Liberals' dangerous policy on Iran and the fact a prominent Jewish family would host him.

So is there a wedge developing in the Jewish community based on political orientation? Not according to a handful of observers who believe differences over parties' positions on Israel and the Mideast won't have a lasting effect.

The community isn't monolithic – there's no one view on which party to support in any election – so political disagreements won't prevent joint action on a host of other issues, whether it be reacting to events in Israel, tackling poverty or supporting Jewish education, they say.

Shimon Fogel was at the centre of some of the political jockeying during the recently concluded campaign. As CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), he received requests from partisan officials eager for him to endorse their party's record on Israel. But he declined, citing legal constraints on charitable organizations.

Yet political differences in the community are nothing new. "These different perspectives had emerged long before Honey and Barry Sherman decided to host an event for Michael Levitt and the Liberals," he said. "It didn't create cleavages that didn't exist before." What's more, he added, "different perspectives are not inherently a bad thing. The Jewish community benefits from a whole range of different views."

As to suggestions Jewish unity might suffer due to politics, "I reject that assertion absolutely," Fogel said. "CIJA is a big table. We have people representing a wide spectrum of political views. I see nothing but warmth and mutual respect around our table."

The three main party leaders at the Munk Debate on Foreign Policy

Nelson Wiseman is a professor of political science at the University of Toronto and has tracked voting trends among different Canadian groups. After the last election in 2011, Ipsos queried more than 39,000 voters at exit polls and found "the most striking shift was among Jews to the Conservatives."

The data looked at a variety of ethnic and religious groups, and found that while the Tories received nearly 40 per cent of the vote overall, a gain from 36 per cent in the prior election, about 52 per cent of Jews backed the Conservatives, up 20 percentage points from 2008. (Jews comprise about one per cent of Canada's population.) By contrast, only 12 per cent of Muslims voted Conservative, while 46 per cent supported the Liberals and 38 per cent backed the NDP.

Wiseman believes some of the Tories' Jewish support stems from their strong stand vis-a-vis Israel. In the 2011 election, then-Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff alienated some Jews by suggesting Israel committed a war crime in a bombing in Lebanon. (He had also authored a piece in 2002 calling for an imposed solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, enforced by foreign troops.)

Jews moved to the Conservatives in part over differences on the Middle East, but also because their socio-economic situation improved over the years, Wiseman said. For some, the Tories, who had been seen as the party of the Anglo-Saxon establishment, is now more welcoming for Jews, who are themselves much more established.

Differences over the Middle East were not at play to the same extent in the recent campaign. The Liberal and NDP messages of support for Israel drew Jews back to those parties, though not to their historical levels, but enough to perhaps swing a vote in ridings held by Tories, he suggested.

Wiseman noted that at the Munk Debate, the issue of Israel was raised by Conservative Leader Stephen Harper, but Trudeau quickly "shut that door," and the issue wasn't pursued. For most Canadians, it's not a factor at all, and for Jewish Canadians, it was less of a factor than in previous elections.

Issie Lyon, chair of the co-ordinating committee of JSpace, a progressive Zionist group, *does* see a divide in the Jewish community. "Many feel they have to support Harper because of his strong support for Israel, regardless of his domestic policies and everything else he's done," Lyon said. "There is a sizable portion of the Jewish community that says we have to take into account what he's done domestically and others who say it's not particularly good for Israel because of his blind support." ■

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Elections official OKed graphic anti-Israel signs

JANICE ARNOLD
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Jewish groups were disappointed by an official decision that graphic political signs accusing Israel of murder posted around Montreal during the campaign did not violate the Canada Elections Act.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and B'nai Brith Canada separately lodged complaints with Elections Canada. The ruling was made by the Commissioner of Canada Elections, an independent officer whose duty is to ensure that the law governing elections is complied with.

The complaints concern signs with a photo of the mangled, lifeless body of a child on a beach and the text in French: "Israel murders Palestinian children/ Harper applauds/ What do the other parties say?"

They were sponsored by BDS-Québec, a committee of the Coalition pour la Justice et la Paix en Palestine. It was registered as a third party with Elections Canada in August, under the name of Bruce Katz, a longtime leader of the anti-Israel group PAJU (Palestinian and Jewish Unity).

Registered third parties have the right to advertise within certain spending limits and funding regulations. Katz said about 100 of the signs were put up, and many could be seen in the downtown core. BDS-Québec also has a Facebook page illustrated with the sign.

"We are very disappointed by the decision," said CIJA chief executive officer Shimon Koffler Fogel. "We have reviewed the Canada Elections Act carefully and remain convinced that these signs are in violation of Article 91, because they blatantly propagate false information.

"While the review process was clearly thoughtful, we are disturbed that the commissioner failed to recognize the factual misrepresentation and manipulation at the centre of this campaign. If these signs are legitimate, then what isn't?"

Article 91 states that, "The Canada Elections Act does not control the content of election advertising except as follows: it prohibits the publication of false statements about a candidate or prospective candidate, in order to affect election results."

To remove third party signs is a criminal offence. The signs, which began appearing the third week of September, refer to the four Palestinian boys who died in July 2014 while playing soccer on a beach allegedly as a result of an Israeli airstrike on the port of Gaza. BDS-Québec is protesting that Israel closed its investigation after finding no criminal responsibility.

> *We are disappointed by the decision.*
>
> **Shimon Koffler Fogel**
> **CIJA CEO**

B'nai Brith CEO Michael Mostyn described the signs as not only disturbing, but also anti-Semitic, and strongly condemned their content and tone.

"The fact that this group was allowed to register for official third party status, and continues to be sanctioned by Elections Canada while posting graphic and incendiary materials aimed at a particular ethnic group, demonstrates a fundamental gap in the Canada Elections Act," said Mostyn.

"We will be bringing this issue forward to the incoming government to address this important area for reform. Election campaigns should explore matters of political interest to all Canadians, but should never target minority groups for hateful incitement."

According to its website, BDS-Québec is supported by 27 groups, including such major unions as the Centrale des syndicats du Québec and the Fédération nationale des enseignantes and des enseignants, the Fédération des femmes du Québec, the student union Association syndicale pour une solidarité étudiante (ASSE), Independent Jewish Voices and the political party Québec solidaire.

One of those listed supporters, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR), the most active pro-Palestinian campus group, distanced itself from the signs.

Javier Hoyos, an SPHR member and a key campaigner to get a boycott, divestment and sanctions resolution passed last fall by the Concordia Student Union, told the Concordia University student newspaper *The Link*: "Unfortunately, when people look at that poster, they will automatically assume that SPHR is involved. We are our own independent group. We have nothing to do with BDS-Québec." ■

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CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK

Now it's time to mend fences in the Jewish community

Daniel Wolgelerenter

When we sat down in early summer to discuss how we'd cover what was expected to be a five-week fall campaign, *CJN* editor Yoni Goldstein asked me to write a weekly column about election topics of Jewish interest. The idea – a departure from past practice of mostly limiting ourselves to rather pedestrian riding profiles – made me a bit nervous.

To echo a current catchphrase, I felt like I was just not ready.

My main concern was finding material to write about, since Jews and Jewish issues had never figured very prominently in a federal election before, even in 2011, when exit polls suggested that for the first time, a majority of Jews had voted Conservative, largely on the strength of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's vocal support for Israel.

But after the longest campaign in modern Canadian history, I can declare that my anxiety was definitely misplaced. Jews and Jewish issues have been more conspicuous in this election than in any campaign in living memory. Jews were news, as they say.

From the many debates and panels held by Jewish groups, shuls and schools across the country, to efforts by the Canadian Jewish Public Affairs Committee urging Jews to volunteer for the party of their choice, *dayeinu* – it would have been enough.

But there was so much more to write about, much of it centred on Israel and which party could best be counted on to support the Jewish state.

Most notably, there was a nasty dustup over businessman Barry Sherman's decision to host a fundraiser for Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau at his Toronto home. Sherman was pilloried in a widely circulated email by a former magazine publisher, who said Sherman was "betraying the memory of the six million" because of Trudeau's choice of advisers, and his brother's views on Israel and the Iran deal. In an unprecedented move, the Jewish Defence League picketed Sherman's house on the evening of the fundraiser.

Meanwhile, perennially embattled York Centre Tory MP Mark Adler found himself at the centre of a national debate for noting in campaign material and on his website that he's the son of a Holocaust survivor, and for claiming he was the first child of a survivor elected to Parliament (he wasn't, as we were first to report).

And who can forget the social media gaffes by candidates from all parties, many of which were about Israel and Jews? A number were uncovered by the upstart satirical news site *True North Times* (*TNT*), run by three young Montreal students, two of whom are Jewish. It showed how a candidate's digital footprint could one day resurface to bite them in the posterior – which might give pause to Jews embroiled in ugly political debates on social media.

Among *TNT*'s finds was NDP candidate Alex Johnstone, a Hamilton school board official who refused to step aside despite admitting to not knowing what Auschwitz was after making a tasteless joke about it on Facebook. Another *TNT* target who did resign was Winnipeg NDPer Stefan Jonasson. He once compared haredi Jews to the Taliban on social media.

One non-*TNT* casualty was Calgary Liberal candidate Ala Buzreba, 21, who quit over comments she made as a teenager on Twitter, saying a supporter of Israel should have been aborted with a coat hanger.

Jews also jumped into the fray when Syrian refugees became a major election issue. A group of prominent Jews criticized the position of the governing Tories on the issue, while others came to the Conservatives' defence, and – though not directly tied to the election – synagogues in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal mobilized to sponsor Syrian families to come to Canada.

And when debate pivoted to the related cultural issues of citizenship and the niqab, Jews had strong views on both sides, as reflected in our pages last week.

This column was written before local and national election results were known, but what can be said with some certainty is that this was arguably the most divisive federal election in Canadian history for the Jewish community.

In the aftermath, there are fences to be mended and a measure of unity to be reclaimed. It makes one hope that Jews and Jewish issues can return to being relative bit players the next time around. ■

Sukkot victims of terror recalled at memorial event

PAUL LUNGEN
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Eitam Henkin was a rabbi, a historian and an author of halachic works, so it was perhaps appropriate that a shiur (lesson) looking at his writings would be an appropriate way to memorialize him.

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner delivered the shiur, citing Rabbi Henkin's work along with rabbinic commentary on the mitzvah of living in the Holy Land.

The shiur was part of "an evening of remembrance" for Rabbi Henkin, his wife, Naama Henkin, Rabbi Nehemia Lavi and Aharon Banita, who were killed during Sukkot and were among the earliest victims of the recent wave of terror attacks in Israel. The memorial was held Oct. 14 at Yeshivat Or Chaim.

Rabbi Henkin was the son of Rabbi Yehuda Henkin and Rabbanit Chana Henkin, who founded Nishmat in Jerusalem as a school to provide Torah learning to women. Rabbi Henkin and Naama Henkin were driving in a car when Palestinian gunmen opened fire, killing them. Their four children, including a four-month old infant, were in the back seat, but were unharmed. Police believe one of the attackers was accidentally shot by his colleagues, prompting them to end the attack.

Rabbi Lavi was killed in the Old City of Jerusalem when he came to the aid of Aharon Banita (Bennett), who was being attacked along with his wife, their two-year-old son and infant daughter by a knife-wielding Palestinian. The Banita family were on their way to pray at the Western Wall. Banita's wife, Adele, was seriously wounded in the attack, while their two-year-old son was lightly wounded and the infant was unharmed.

Rabbi Torczyner said that although he did not know Rabbi Henkin personally, scanning his website revealed a scholar of broad interests on a wide range of Torah-related subjects. "What emerges is an active and inquisitive mind... suspicious of jingoism and the party line," he said.

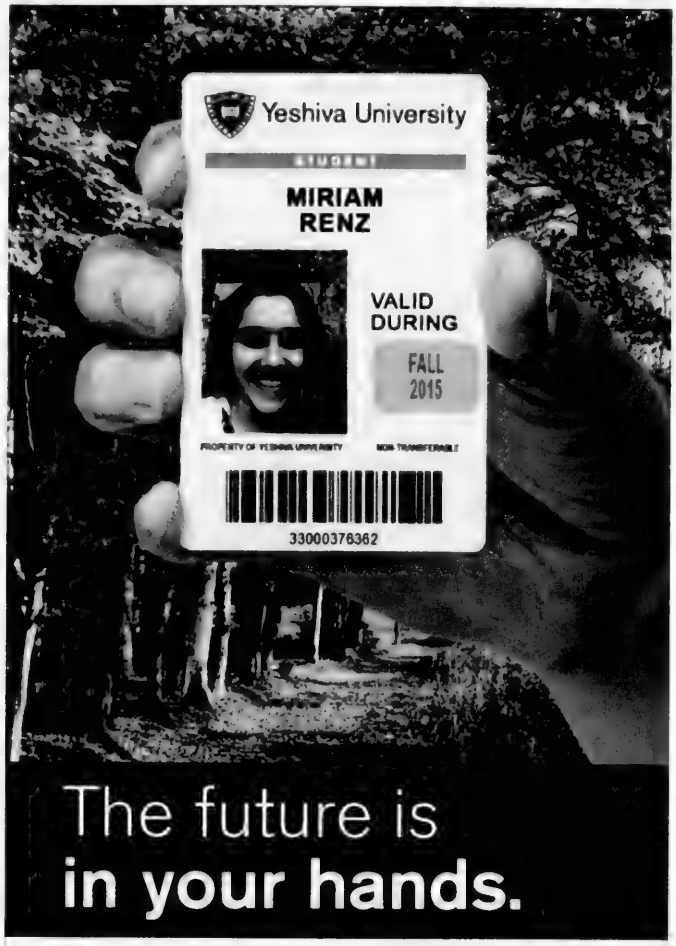
Among the late rabbi's prolific writings was an examination of the mitzvah of living in Israel. Rabbi Henkin lived with the people of Israel, recognized the differences among them yet felt Jews should embrace one another. He revelled in the unity of the nation on Tu b'Av. Rabbi Torczyner concluded by noting the importance to Rabbi Henkin of the unity of Am Yisrael (the nation of Israel).

Earlier, eulogies for the four victims were read, including one for Rabbi Henkin delivered at his funeral in Jerusalem by his brother, Yagil Henkin.

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, above, eulogized Rabbi Eitam Henkin Oct. 14. PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

"Eitam and Naama were not killed by 'terror,'" Yagil stated. "They are victims of an act of hostility. It was hostility behind the murder. Human beings driven by hatred went out to the road in order to murder Jews, and they succeeded. They took my brother from me and from my siblings; from Yishai they took his sister Naama; from my parents and from Naama's parents they took their children; from the children – Matan, Nitzan, Neta and Itamar – they took their parents, they took the right to grow up in a family, with the experiences and memories of a warm, unified and loving family. They took from you, who stand here, a talented and optimistic couple, who were destined to greatness. And they continue to take from everyone the sense of security. They were Arab murderers, backed by a too-large segment of Arab society, with far too little principled opposition to murder. An enemy. An enemy who utilizes terror.

"Do not degrade their memory by turning them into victims of a force of nature. Debate about policy, not about the murdered. Do not find justification and sympathy for murderers. Keep your empathy for the children who were left orphans, to the parents who were left bereft. And for the people of Israel, who still have a long way before being able to sit peacefully beneath their vines and fig trees." ■



Meet Miriam Renz from Sharon, Massachusetts. An English Literature major at Yeshiva University, Miriam spent her summer creating curricula for a teaching conference at the Walden Woods Project, a nonprofit that preserves the legacy of Henry David Thoreau. Through the internship, Miriam was able to combine her love of literature with her passion for environmental awareness.

At YU, Miriam is pursuing her Liberal Arts degree while simultaneously engaging in a meaningful Judaic studies curriculum. This is the essence of Torah U'Madda and what sets YU apart.

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Eitz Chaim preschool opens under provisional license

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After new provincial child-care regulations forced Eitz Chaim Schools to postpone the start of the school year for its nursery and preschool programs, the school reopened just before the Sukkot holiday and is operating under a provisional license.

At the start of the school year, many parents were left scrambling to find child care for their children after many Jewish daycares, preschool and nursery programs that weren't in compliance with the new rules were forced to shut down, either temporarily or permanently.

The Child Care and Early Years Act replaced the Day Nurseries Act in August and applies to unlicensed child care, home child-care providers contracted by a licensed agency, licensed home child-care agencies, and licensed child-care centres.

Some of the new rules dictate that a provider can only care for a maximum of two children under the age of two; that a licensed home child-care provider can care for a maximum of six children under the age of 13; and that the maximum number of children applies regardless of the number of adults in the home.

Eitz Chaim was one of the schools affected by the new legislation, forcing it to temporarily shut down its nursery and pre-nursery programs, but it has since been granted a temporary license while administrators work to meet the requirements on issues such as zoning, fire code, health code, building code, insurance and specific operating policies.

In a letter than went out in September to parents of children enrolled at Eitz Chaim, administrators explained that although they were aware of the new regulations that would come into effect for the 2015-16 school year, the school's legal counsel advised them that the Ministry of Education would likely allow the preschool to operate with an extension while they sorted things out with the province.

Administrators hoped Eitz Chaim's preschools would be allowed to operate as religious, cultural and linguistic instruction programs, which they thought would exempt them from the license requirement, but that was not the case.

Carly Haber, a mother of twin two-year-old boys enrolled at Eitz Chaim, said she suspects the confusion and postponement of the nursery and pre-school programs was the result of "bad legal advice."

New rules no longer grandfather private schools.

"My older son's school was totally ahead of the game. We found out about the ministry guidelines last year. They said they'd be making all these changes. I should have thought to check with Eitz Chaim, but the truth is they said they were told they got legal advice that they qualified for a religious exemption, but there's no reason they would have gotten a religious exemption. They're a school," Haber said.

Gary Wheeler, a spokesperson from the Ministry of Education, explained that "schools serving children under the age of 3.8 years that were previously exempted from licensing requirements were given over a year to prepare, and were notified in writing as early as March 6, 2014."

He said the ministry extended the deadline for the licensing requirement to be met by grandfathered private schools by six months, from July 1, 2015, to January 1, 2016, but schools would have had to apply for that by January 2015, in order to operate while the application process was ongoing.

"There was also follow-up with schools who missed that deadline, including multiple phone calls, correspondence and on-site visits," Wheeler said.

Requests for comment from Eitz Chaim were not returned by *The CJN*'s deadline.

Gan Sameach preschool, which operated out of the Shomrei Shabbos Chevrah Mishnayos Congregation in Toronto, and served about 40 children, was another school that was not licensed when the new regulations came into effect. It remains closed indefinitely.

"My neighbour was sending their kids to Gan Sameach," Haber said.

"She was stuck, but now her daughter is with a babysitter," she said, adding that some mothers offered to help.

"Some people just felt that they could have a playgroup in their house. They said, 'I have one of my kids at home and I could take two more kids and make some money.'" ■

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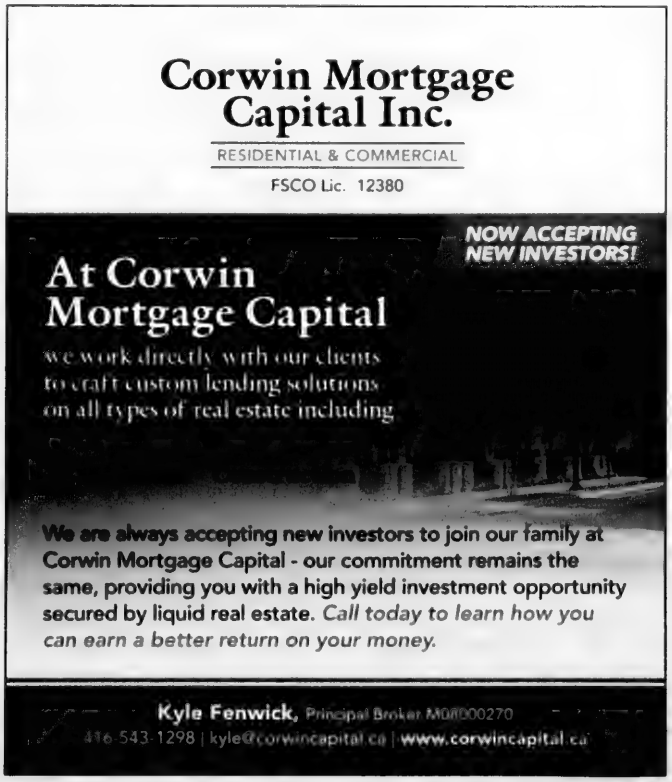
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Teens learn real-world philanthropy on charitable board

JODIE SHUPAC
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Thirty Jewish teens will spend the next seven months making real-world financial decisions together, with the direct impact reflected in the Toronto Jewish community.

The Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto, in collaboration with WOW!, an initiative of UJA Federation's Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education and the Jewish Teen Funders Network, launched a new project this month called the Jewish Teen Board.

Funding will also come from Laura Lauder and the Maimonides Fund.

The venture will see a group of high school students from around the city forming a volunteer philanthropy board and going through an actual granting process involving organizations in the community.

Program co-ordinator Aron Katz said the board is the first program of its kind in the Toronto Jewish community, but it's launching alongside similar programs being run in Boston and Melbourne, Australia, a year after the San Diego Jewish Community Foundation and the Jewish Fund in Detroit created teen boards of their own.

The purpose, Katz explained, is to "grow supplementary Jewish education and engagement" by encouraging giving and creating social change through a Jewish lens.

It will further give the teenage participants, who range from grades 9 to 11, the chance to fulfil their quota of school-mandated community service hours in a way that's educational and meaningful.

The 30 students who comprise the board were selected Oct. 7, following an application process involving interviews and, for some of the applicants, a nomination from someone in a leadership position within the community.

Katz said the response was overwhelming and that the program attracted students from Jewish high schools in Toronto, as well as students from public schools in other GTA municipalities such as Newmarket and Oakville who may have had less exposure to Jewish communal life.

"We looked for people who want to make a difference in the community and enhance their leadership abilities," he said.

From the end of October to June, the teens will meet once a month at the Lipa Green Centre and operate in the same way a charitable or family foundation does: they'll learn about the needs facing the Jewish community and create a mission statement after choosing to focus on one area, such as senior citizens, the Holocaust survivor community, health or food security.

Aron Katz

From there, they'll work to forge connections with the different charities and agencies that provide services in line with their mandate. They'll then put out a request for grant proposals to different charitable organizations and agencies, who will submit grant applications to the board.

Lastly, the board will undergo a review process and at the program's culmination, hold a ceremony to present cheques to the organizations they've chosen to support and summarize all the work they've done.

Katz said the Jewish Foundation doesn't yet know how much money funders will give the board for grants. He also said he's not sure how many groups the board will give grants to, since that it will depend on the need they choose to support.

The grant money will come primarily from the board's funders, but the students themselves will also do some fundraising. Katz said that will help them get a taste of what it's like to engage potential donors and ultimately "close the deal."

With an educational background in marketing and communications, Katz said he'll be training the teens in strategic philanthropy and fundraising skills, but that partners of the Jewish Foundation and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto will also provide mentorship and networking opportunities.

Katz said the program gives teens an insider view of how charities work.

"A lot of these teenagers have volunteered in places like soup kitchens or seniors homes. But this program shows them... the nature of why these types of organizations exist and allows them to them make a difference from the root. It lets them see a program on paper that doesn't yet exist and make decisions to fund something they'll later see in action." ■

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CABGU is extremely grateful to Montreal's Lederman Foundation, which made the team's participation possible.

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Canadian olim root for Jays in the Holy Land

DANIEL KOREN
dkoren@thecjn.ca

The Segal children

In Modi'in, an affluent community 35 km southeast of Tel Aviv and 30 km west of Jerusalem, a car is parked on the side of a busy road, a blue flag protruding from a rear window.

It's not the flag of Israel, however. It's a Toronto Blue Jays banner.

With an estimated population of more than 75,000, Modi'in has a large contingent of Canadian, American and other English-speaking olim who have settled there.

One such family includes Toronto-born Ernest Segal, his Montrealer wife, and their four children. According to Segal, 45, the family is mixed when it comes to certain sports teams – his wife and one of his sons are Montreal Canadiens fans for example – but they're all in agreement when it comes to the Blue Jays.

"We are a family of Blue Jays fans," Segal said by phone from Israel. "This summer, we came back to Toronto, so I made sure we went to a bunch of games."

Thanks to MLB TV, which you can livestream via the Internet, being a Jays fan in Israel is easier than you'd think. And with the playoffs, Canadian olim have also "#ComeTOgether," to use the slogan and hashtag associated with the Jays' playoff run, despite being 9,263 km away.

For Game 1 of the Blue Jays-Rangers American League Division Series (ALDS), Segal hosted a party for his family and other Torontonians in the area to watch the game. The seven-hour time difference wasn't even that much of a problem, with the game starting at 3:37 p.m. EST.

"We had barbecue, drank beers, and watched the game. Though they lost, word still got around the community, and we're expecting even more people for our Game 2 barbecue against Kansas," Segal told *The CJN* ahead of the Oct. 17 American League Championship Series (ALCS) matchup.

Due to the time difference, living in Israel actually makes it easier for religious Jews to watch Saturday games.

"I'm shomer Shabbat so in Toronto I can't watch games that start at 1 p.m. or 4 p.m.," explained Meir Balofsky, a fellow Toronto expat who lives in Ramat Gan. "But here I can."

Which meant he didn't have to miss Game 2 of the ALCS, and thanks to social media, "it feels like you're cheering along with friends and family from all over the world," he added.

An avid sports fan, Balofsky said the Blue Jays were his "first true sports love." In fact, despite his living in Israel since 2004, he's attended at least one game per season since 1979.

While baseball is not yet mainstream in Israel, it is becoming more popular, particularly in Modi'in, which had a team in the Israel Baseball League, a six-squad pro circuit that played for one season in 2007.

"There's a family from Texas here, and there's been a lot of trash talking in shul," Segal says. "There's a family from Kansas, too, so that has definitely continued."

As for the Blue Jays flag on Segal's car, while most Israelis don't recognize it, a woman did honk at his wife while she was driving. "I haven't seen that in 20 years, since I lived in Toronto!" she told her.

Coincidentally, after the Jays' historic Game 5 win on Oct. 14, Balofsky walked into a store in Givatayim wearing a Blue Jays hat and the store owner yelled at him, "Did you see the game?!"

"He went off about Jose Bautista and his home run, and was clearly not North American by any stretch," he said.

Twenty-four-year-old Leor Mann, who made aliyah from Toronto in 2013 and joined the IDF a year later, said the first thing he did when he moved to Israel was purchase MLB TV and the MLB at Bat app. "There is no Sportsnet or TSN here, and the only sports shown on TV are soccer and basketball," he said.

Mann said that he "prays" for afternoon games. "I watched every game of the Texas series, though I did fall asleep during Game 3, which started at 3 a.m. here."

Having been born in 1991, Mann has "no memory" of the Jays' back-to-back World Series championships in 1992 and 1993.

"My father was at the game when Joe Carter 'touched them all' [in 1993] and has had a huge influence on my love of the game. In extraordinary fashion, Bautista has supplied my generation's Joe Carter moment. I can only hope this continues to the World Series."

Amen. ■

New resource guide for people with special needs

The original members of the Toronto Jewish Disabilities Network at their first meeting in 2011

SHERI SHEFA
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It was a project two years in the making, but now people with disabilities and their families have access to a comprehensive resource guide that provides information about the Jewish organizations in Toronto and elsewhere that offer relevant services.

Susie Sokol, the director and co-founder of Dani (Developing Nurturing and Independence) – a parent-driven organization that serves individuals with disabilities as well as their families and caregivers, and helps people with physical and/or cognitive challenges integrate into the community – said *The Toronto Jewish Disability Resource Guide* is the first of its kind in our area.

"This is the first one in Toronto. And in many other cities, I don't think there is one to this extent," Sokol said.

The 140-page resource guide for people with disabilities and their families lists resources that cater to their needs both locally and abroad.

In addition to a list of camps, schools, synagogues and other organizations that work to accommodate children and adults with disabilities, the resource guide also provides a list of articles, links and other resources in Canada, the United States, England, Israel and South Africa, that help to inform members of the Jewish community about ways to foster a more inclusive society.

She explained that about four years ago, she initiated a partnership with a number of Toronto-based organizations that work with adults and children with special needs, including Reena, Jewish Family & Child, Friendship Circle and Zareinu Educational Centre.

The idea behind the Toronto Jewish Disability Network, which includes UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Itanu Toronto, was to address some of the frustrations parents who have children with special needs feel when trying to find services and support to help their children lead productive lives.

"A few years ago, we started the Toronto Jewish Disability Network... We got together and decided that we would form a group and also look at what is missing in Toronto, seeing what is duplicated, making sure there are enough services for everyone of all ages. For example, make sure there is a Purim party for older kids, for adults, and that everyone is invited and everyone knows about it," Sokol said.

"We thought we'd put out a resource guide. This was our first project – to put together articles, links, information about which shuls are wheelchair accessible, what community organizations will accept adults and how they will support them."

She said about two years ago, the network members started working on the guide, and it took them about a year and a half to collect all the information, find someone to underwrite the project, and produce it.

"We wanted the guide to be free for families. We did not want parents to pay for it."

On Oct. 11, a book launch for the resource guide attracted about 100 people who gathered to celebrate.

"Parents can come to Dani to pick up a copy for their synagogue, for themselves, for their organization, for anybody," Sokol said.

"I've had incredible feedback. They've said, 'This is perfect, this is what we've needed.' There is lots of good information for families to navigate the system. It is information for doctors. I got a call from a doctor who has been practising for 30 years, and he said, 'I had my first patient with autism. Where can I direct him?' Rabbis and educators can also see what's out there."

She said a new website dedicated to the resource guide is currently under construction. "It will be a one-stop shop for families, professionals – everyone can look at this website and see what's available, see who is coming to town to speak, update the resource guide and... see what's happening." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 22, 2015

Fundraiser to support young women with breast cancer

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

PYNK: Breast Cancer Program for Young Women was the first organization in Canada to offer a comprehensive package of optimal care, support and cutting edge research specifically for women 40 and under with breast cancer.

"Young women diagnosed with breast cancer face challenges that women of other age groups do not face," says Alexandra Landsberg, a survivor of breast cancer when she was 27.

PYNK and Na'amat Canada Toronto have formed a partnership to raise money at a Cabaret For Caring on Oct. 25, at 7 p.m at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation.

Na'amat supports women and children in many areas of daily life in Canada and Israel including education and counselling in a unique community centre in northern Israel. It offers treatment and educational opportunities to at risk children and teens, as well as shelters for vulnerable women and children who are victims of abuse. Na'amat touches approximately 40,000 lives each year, notes Lori Nusbaum, senior fundraising and development officer at Na'amat.

Both organizations are supported entirely by private donations.

The evening will pay tribute to the memory of two women, Rickey Fitzerman, the founding member and driving force behind PYNK, and Rivka Shaffir, a past national president of Na'amat Canada, whose passion for educating and counselling women in Canada and Israel has made a difference in many lives.

"It is just under 20 years since my breast cancer diagnosis, says Landsberg, a co-chair of the event, "and I am therefore proudly co-chairing this event in memory of my friend Rickey Fitzerman." Na'amat co-chairs are Doris Wexler-Charow and Celina Fenster.

Dr. Ellen Warner, a medical oncologist at Sunnybrook Health Science Centre introduced Landsberg to Fitzerman in 2007. Fitzerman was the motivation for starting PYNK and inspired a group of young breast cancer survivors to fundraise to establish the organization.

Since 1993, Warner has been a staff medical oncologist at the Sunnybrook Odette Cancer Centre. She is a professor of medicine at the University of Toronto and director of PYNK.

Dr. Ellen Warner

The PYNK program began in 2008. To date, 250 young women aged 17 to 40, their partners and their families have benefited from PYNK's services, Warner says. The young women receive a continuum of care from the time of diagnosis through treatment and long-term follow-up.

"Women diagnosed with breast cancer before age 40 generally have more aggressive disease and more treatment side effects than older women," Warner says.

She says that patients are fast tracked to the right specialists. The nurse navigates them through the maze of tests and treatments and continues to support them and their family as long as necessary after active treatment has ended.

"Even years after treatment is complete, young women have greater physical and psychological distress than older women, due to issues such as breast loss or deformity, infertility, premature menopause, sexual dysfunction and fear of recurrence before their children have grown up."

Cabaret For Caring will feature Aelita: The Queen of Cabaret, big band music, singing, dancing, a wine bar and desserts. ■

For more information visit www.cabaretforcaring.com or phone 416-636-5425.

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Toronto philanthropist inspires Jewish women in Ottawa

DIANE KOVEN
OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT

From left, Sharon Appotive, Women's Division annual appeal chair for 2015-2016; Shari Silber, event chair for Choices; Julia Koschitzky; Linda Kerzner, chair, Jewish Federation of Ottawa; and Andrea Freedman, president and CEO, Jewish Federation of Ottawa HOWARD SANDLER PHOTO

Prominent Toronto activist, philanthropist and Jewish community volunteer Julia Koschitzky was the keynote speaker at this year's annual Choices event, held by the Jewish Federation Ottawa's Women's Campaign.

Koschitzky's message of the importance and value of being involved resonated with the 275 women (and two men) present at the Oct. 8 event, held at Agudath Israel Congregation.

Koschitzky shared her own life story, which began in Wales, where her German Jewish parents had settled after escaping from Germany. Ten years later, the family immigrated to Canada, living in Toronto, where she later met her husband, Henry.

She spoke of the various choices she has made over the years, including the decision to accept a volunteer position that led to more and more volunteer experiences, leadership roles and ultimately the Order of Canada this past summer.

"I was nurtured and inspired to assume many roles," she said of those who mentored her along the way.

Speaking of recent events in Europe, where so many Syrian refugees are seeking new homes and lives, Koschitzky reminisced about her involvement in the rescue and resettlement of Soviet Jewry many years ago.

Seeing pictures of the Syrians trying to board trains in Budapest "stands as a stark contrast to when I stood at the same train station in Budapest in the early 1990s to welcome Soviet immigrants," she said.

"I felt that I was witnessing the Exodus from the Bible... Israel welcomed them all with open arms and unconditional love – how markedly different from the refugees arriving in Europe today."

Koschitzky acknowledged the many dedicated volunteers in the Ottawa Jewish community and listed a number of projects the community has undertaken to help Israel. "At the heart of all these efforts is the knowledge and realization that without solidarity with Israel, there can be no continuity," she said.

Over the past 30 years, Koschitzky's volunteer work has taken her to 52 communities on five continents. She said she feels privileged to have been able to do the work she has done and encouraged the audience members to become involved in their community as well.

"Let us be inspired to learn more, to do more, but most of all to be more," she urged.

"I believe that women are change-makers and community-shapers of the world."

The Choices event, chaired this year by Shari Silber, is an annual dinner that seeks to involve women in the Jewish community and encourage first-time donors to the federation's annual campaign.

This year's event included 60 women who attended for the first time, as well as nine students from Grade 8 at the Ottawa Jewish Community School, who were invited with the aim of inspiring the next generation. ■

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50 שנה לקרן לירושלים
THE JERUSALEM FOUNDATION 50TH ANNIVERSARY
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Dear Friends,

At this difficult time for Jerusalem, our hearts go out to the families of those killed and we pray for the wounded. With the unceasing support of people in Israel and around the world who care deeply for Jerusalem, the Jerusalem Foundation continues our mission on behalf of the city and its residents

Now, more than ever, we must diligently support the people of our beloved city and take every step to preserve and enrich day-to-day life in its communities. We firmly believe that community empowerment and solidarity will help us navigate through the current reality and this is our mission.

Over almost 50 years, the Jerusalem Foundation founded and supported the communal, cultural and educational networks in Jerusalem, developing the neighborhoods and communities of Jerusalem and the resilience of the people of this great city. Now in this moment of trial, Jerusalemites are showing restraint, courage and hope. Always also hope.

Please join forces with the Jerusalem Foundation in order to achieve our common goals, of strengthening and supporting the people of Jerusalem. We will provide counseling and support services to those most in need: the children, youth and young families of Jerusalem, the elderly living on their own, the special needs populations of the city. Living with this kind of stress and fear can have a serious impact on the social fabric of the city. The Jerusalem Foundation is working hand in hand with the municipality and our many partners, particularly at this time of crisis, to show Jerusalemites that they are not alone.

We pray for quieter days, days of peace.

Yohanna Arbib Perugia
President

"Pray for peace in Jerusalem. May all who love this city prosper"
Psalm 122:6

To show your support for the people of Jerusalem, go to: www.jerusalemfoundation.org

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mberger@jerusalemfoundation.ca

Halifax synagogue celebrates 125 years

Beth Israel Synagogue was founded in 1890 by the Baron de Hirsch Hebrew Benevolent Society.

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT

The Beth Israel Synagogue in Halifax is ready to celebrate.

From Oct. 23 to 25, the membership will commemorate 125 years of Jewish life in Halifax during a gala Friday night Shabbat dinner, a Saturday kiddush to honor four outstanding volunteers and a cantorial concert Sunday evening, bringing together three men for whom Halifax has great meaning.

It was 125 years ago, in 1890, when the Beth Israel's founding body, the Baron de Hirsch Hebrew Benevolent Society, was formed by a small number of Jews in the Nova Scotia capital. By 1894, it had its own synagogue, a revamped church, which stood until it was levelled by the Halifax Explosion in 1917.

Three years later, a new synagogue was built that lasted until 1957, when growing numbers determined a larger, more modern building was needed. The south-end Halifax shul, whose building is now 58 years old, remains active today.

Membership through the first half of the 20th century mushroomed from 118 in 1901 to 1,089 (more than 225 member families) in 1961. Today, there are less than 100 member families, but the Orthodox shul continues to be the only one east of Montreal with daily minyans and active programs.

President Steven Zatzman, a Halifax lawyer, says that "our community has changed over time, and dramatic changes are continuing to challenge our congregation yet our legacy to future generations is the enrichment the whole Halifax Jewish community receives from the services and facilities we provide."

Chief gabbai Irwin Mendleson, one of those being honoured at the Shabbat kiddush, struggles to assemble 10 men for daily morning minyan. He says, however, "I've seen the importance of keeping our traditions going. I see how members, and the many visitors who come to our doors, need a minyan to say *Kaddish* and how rewarding it is for us to be there for them."

> *I've seen the importance of keeping our traditions going*

When he's forced to miss a daily service, the still-practising optometrist says, "I feel guilty if I'm not there, as though I'm letting someone down."

He laughs. "Thank goodness some of the wives kick their husbands before 7:30 in the morning for services."

The Three Cantors Concert will bring together three men with Halifax roots.

Mo Glazman, Halifax-raised and educated, is now senior cantor at New York's Central Synagogue. Tibor Kovari, chazzan and music director at Toronto's Beth Tikvah Synagogue, had his first cantorial and teaching experience in Canada at the Beth Israel in Halifax.

Ede Berkovits, a Montrealer, did post-graduate music work at Dalhousie University in Halifax and part-time cantorial duties at Beth Israel. He met and married his wife in Halifax and recently returned to be cantor on holidays and special occasions.

Despite dwindling membership, common to many shuls across Canada and particularly in smaller communities, Zatzman declares, "Our responsibility is to strive for openness and inclusivity, recognition and acceptance of differences in the needs, desires and diversity within our Jewish community so we may strengthen the Baron de Hirsch Hebrew Benevolent Society as it enters the future with renewed vigour." ■

Israel must make concessions now for peace: Rabin's son

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Yuval Rabin, is welcomed by Sory! Rosenberg, Montreal chair of the Canadian Friends of Peace Now. JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

Even amid the current violence, Israel must take the lead in restarting the peace process by engaging not only the Palestinians, but also Arab countries within the region, the son of the slain Yitzhak Rabin said.

"Peace has to be negotiated with our enemies," Yuval Rabin said. If Israel does not deal with Hamas now, it will soon have Islamic State on its border.

Rabin was the guest speaker Oct. 14 at a Montreal event to mark the approaching 20th anniversary of the Israeli prime minister's assassination, sponsored by Canadian Friends of Peace Now and the Labor Zionist Circle, in co-operation with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

Rabin, a high-tech businessman, is chair and co-founder of the Israel Peace Initiative (IPI), which in 2011 released an alternative proposal for achieving a two-state solution. As the name suggests, IPI believes Israel should once again take the lead in securing its future and not just react to external threats, which Rabin believes is the case now.

He said Israel must be prepared to concede the West Bank and the Arab sections of Jerusalem, as well as lift the blockade on Gaza and give up claim to the Temple Mount, if it is to have lasting peace, and survive as a Jewish state.

Rabin warned that Jews are no longer the majority from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan Valley, and Arabs today account for 40 per cent of Jerusalem's population. Moreover, those residents' allegiance is rapidly shifting toward Hamas, he said.

Gaza, currently ruled by Hamas and densely populated by 1.5 million people, is a "time bomb" that must be defused now, he said.

If peace talks do not resume, the so-called one-state solution will soon be a reality, he said.

Potential partners for Israel in the regional framework include Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians.

These jurisdictions, like Israel, all fear Islamic extremism and Iran's power. Together, they could co-ordinate their defence against this threat, he said.

A regional rather than a bilateral approach also offers Israel the guarantee that the Palestinians will abide by their concessions, such as on Jerusalem and the right of return.

A multilateral peace agreement would be an economic boon to Israel, Rabin argued. He believes in the decade following this, the country would have another $100 billion not only for secu[illegible]t for social, environmental, technology and law enforcement spending.

To date, he said, the Israeli government has ignored the proposal by IPI, which Rabin said has 700 members representing various political leanings.

Polls indicate that 65 to 70 per cent of Israelis support the plan, and Rabin said his discussions with many Arabs indicate similar openness.

Rabin, who spoke to a capacity audience at the Gelber Conference Centre, characterized his father's murder as a "cold-blooded, calculated act" committed by an ultra-nationalist, anti-democratic religious extremist in a time of bitter division and unchecked incendiary rhetoric.

He resents those in Israel who contend Rabin brought it on himself because of the wave of unprecedented Palestinian terror, including suicide bombings and opposition to the settlements.

As for whether the Oslo accords were a failure, as many allege, Rabin noted that since the last agreement was signed in 1995, the PLO and its successor, the Palestinian Authority, have not perpetrated any violence against Israelis.

"Oslo was the last meaningful progress... All subsequent rounds have failed," he said.

Rabin, who was critical of the Netanyahu government's lack of leadership, said none of the issues that split Israelis apart before the assassination have gone away, and the arguments on both sides remain the same and equally ineffective.

Those religious and political figures he believes were responsible for the "incitement" that led to the assassination are still unrestrained, and some hold positions of power today.

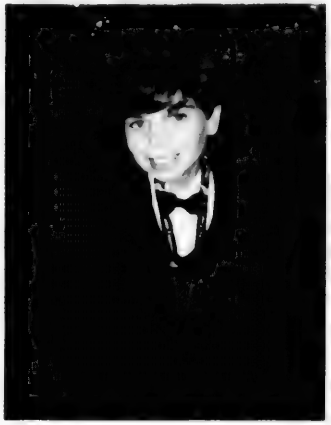
Public discourse is as overwrought among Jewish Israelis as it was in the period before the assassination, he added.

During the question period, Rabin said he is concerned that North American Jews feel compelled to support the right wing. "Israel is the enterprise of the Jewish People... Every Jew should be part of what goes on there." ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 22, 2015

9-year-old CEO is raising funds to help fix kids' hearts

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN



Joshua Belzowski, left, at the David Foster Foundation Gala, where he pledged to raise $10,000 from his lemonade stand to sponsor a family going through a child's organ and heart transplant, and at right with sister Amanda in 2007.

The 17th annual Amanda's Lemonade Stand fundraiser will take place Oct. 25 at 33 Post Rd. from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., but this year, it features a new twist: it's been fully "Joshified."

Nine-year-old Joshua Belzowski, CEO of Amanda's Lemonade Stand, has taken over planning for the event to raise funds to fix kids' hearts, but he's also raising awareness about the importance of getting involved in helping others.

"At the recent David Foster Foundation Gala, my brother Joshua proudly stood up in front of 1,000 people and personally pledged to raise an additional $10,000 more at this year's lemonade stand fundraiser, specifically to sponsor a family going through a child's organ and heart transplant," said older sister Amanda, founder of Amanda's Lemonade Stand.

Amanda was only two years old when her family held its first lemonade stand. To date, she and her family have raised more than $200,000 for the Heart & Stroke Foundation, Save A Child's Heart, and the Hospital for Sick Children.

Said Mike Ravenhill, CEO of the David Foster Foundation, which supports families of kids who need organ transplants and is a first-time beneficiary this year: "The David Foster Foundation is thrilled and honoured that through the annual Amanda's Lemonade Stand, they have graciously included our foundation as one of the beneficiaries. At the end of the day our families and children 'win the day' as 100 per cent of the donations received through this event to the foundation will go to support families and children across Canada, going through the life-saving organ transplant process."

Giving from the heart is what Josh and Amanda's mother, Lisa Fruitman-Belzowski, learned from her late father, Lou Fruitman, and what her children learned from their zaide.

Fruitman-Belzowski explained to *The CJN* how it all began.

"I was on the very first [Becel Heart and Stroke] Ride for Heart. I carried on in that vein with my husband and daughter Amanda, who was just shy of two years old [when she first attended], riding in the back carrier of my bike. I explained to her why there were so many people on the ride. I put her hand on her heart – because you can 'feel' that – and I said, all of these people are fixing the heart, because for some people it doesn't sound like that – it makes a different thump," Fruitman-Belzowski said.

"On the way home from the ride, we stopped for lemonade where two young girls had set up a lemonade stand. It inspired us, so we set up our own lemonade stand on our front lawn a week later. All week, Amanda was putting her hand on her heart and telling everyone what she had learned," she added.

"Amanda raised $500 that first year and knew she had done something good. She understood she helped fix hearts the way only a small child can. It really is as simple as that. Kids can do these things and they understand. That's what makes it magical."

Now a first-year student away at university, Amanda eventually decided to hand over the event to Joshua, who has been by her side since he was born, and has followed closely in her footsteps.

"I have been CEO since I was five years old. Amanda really needed a helper. I was in charge of the cookie counter, pouring the lemonade and talking to everybody," said Josh with a smile.

Amanda will be at the fundraising event to help mentor, but this is the first year Josh will be doing all the planning.

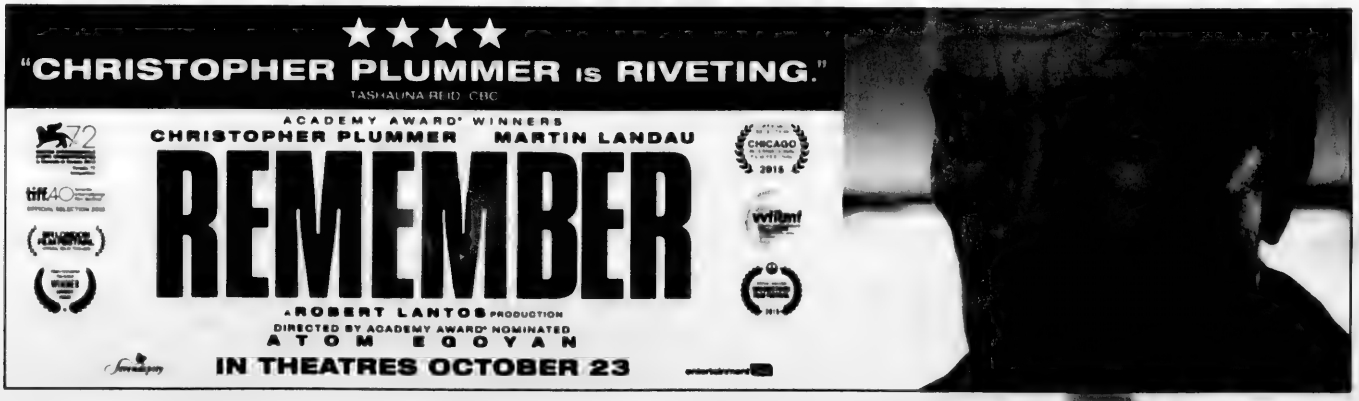
"Josh drew a picture when he was three years old of a heart flower. It actually represented an organ transplant, and now Joshua is going to teach people about the importance of registering to be an organ donor and help raise funds and awareness as well," Amanda said.

All of the proceeds will help fix kids' hearts locally and worldwide through SickKids Hospital, Save a Child's Heart and through research sponsored by the Heart and Stroke Foundation. As well, it will go toward promoting organ donation. This year, in addition to the David Foster Foundation, Joshua has added Canadian Blood Services and Trillium Gift of Life Network, to help promote becoming an organ donor, as beneficiaries.

"Our motto: you are never too little to make a big difference. If we can raise $200,000 on a front lawn, then anything is possible," said Joshua with pride.

The event will have food, kids activities, music, live auction and plenty of free lemonade, sugar-free lemonade and cookies for all. ■

For more information, visit www.lemonade4heart.org.



Human trafficking is happening in Canada, journalist says

W5's Victor Malarek tells NCJW event it's a myth that women choose prostitution

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

People think human trafficking is something that only happens "over there," in Third World countries, but it happens right here in Canada, journalist and author Victor Malarek told a packed room of more than 100 people at the National Council of Jewish Women's (NCJW) Toronto headquarters Oct. 8.

The NCJW organized the event so members and people from the community at large could learn about the global sex trade. Malarek, a senior investigative reporter for CTV's *W5* and a former police reporter in Montreal, is the author of several books exploring the phenomenon.

Malarek gave an impassioned speech about what he called "the global sex trade calamity," explaining that the focus must be turned on the men who purchase sex, rather than the women who sell it, the large majority of whom Malarek insisted aren't choosing to be in the profession, but are either coerced or too desperate to feel they have another option.

He emphasized that those who buy sex are responsible for fuelling the international human trafficking industry, which sees millions of women and girls bought and sold domestically and abroad in countries spanning the globe.

He argued that people imagine the typical john to be "a creepy lounger in a basement hyped up on porn," but that his research has shown him that men who buy sex are ordinary men from all backgrounds and walks of life.

"They're husbands and fathers, CEOs, lawyers, politicians, judges, actors, athletes... even men of the cloth, like rabbis and priests," he said, adding, "Little will be done to stop the worldwide sexual carnage until men generally take responsibility for the men who feel they have the right to buy sex... Men want to believe prostitution is the world's oldest profession, but it's actually the world's oldest oppression."

Victor Malarek

> *This business will always be organized by criminals and pimps. Even if you legalize prostitution, you're just giving [these criminals] a legal table to do what they do.*

He said the johns often buy into myths about women choosing to sell themselves, seeking to ease their consciences about purchasing sex.

Malarek laid out a number of realities that he said counter this and other myths johns may subscribe to. They include:

- Most women and girls are forced into prostitution.
- Most women are recruited into the sex trade as young as 12 or 13, even in western countries.
- Most girls who are recruited are the victims of broken families and sexual abuse by family members.
- The vast majority of prostituted women are controlled by criminal gangs.
- Many are addicted to drugs.
- Many suffer serious mental health issues.

Malarek said myths about women choosing prostitution has led to a global situation that sees tens of millions of women and girls selling themselves, and the problem is only getting worse.

"Over the past few decades, the demand for purchased sex has gone off the charts," he said, attributing the rise to factors such as poverty, government corruption, lack of education, the "hardcore porn industry" and people in countries across the world, including Canada, who are pushing to legalize prostitution.

The pervasive problem of prostitution can be challenged if men "man up" and speak out against attitudes and actions that victimize women and girls, Malarek said.

Further, he said schools must teach boys and girls about gender equality and healthy relationships.

He argued that easy access to hardcore pornography online is affecting boys from a very young age and skewing their idea of what real, consensual sex looks like.

People can address this by lobbying the government to place regulations on the amount of free porn that's available, as well as sponsoring public awareness campaigns that call attention to gender equality, pornography, assault and the exploitation of women and girls on the Internet.

Malarek touched on the federal government's introduction of legislation in 2014 that makes it illegal to purchase sexual services, but legal to sell them.

Critics of the legislation who argue that prostitution should be legalized or further decriminalized in order to empower women in the business are misguided, he said.

"There's this tiny minority of twits who are saying they want to be doing prostitution and their rights are being impugned," he declared, adding, "This business will always be organized by criminals and pimps. Even if you legalize prostitution, you're just giving [these criminals] a legal table to do what they do."

While it's difficult to track numbers of how many women are being trafficked or selling sex – many are too terrified to come forward to the police – Malarek insisted that "Toronto has a very live and wild prostitution racket."

He concluded by telling the audience that gender equality will never be possible unless prostitution of women and girls is eradicated, and added, "This is the biggest enslavement of people since the blacks were slaves in the United States." ■

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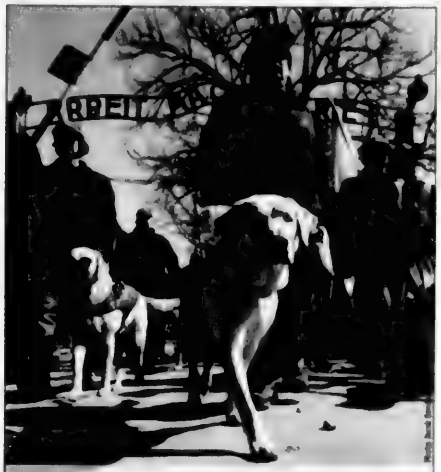


CANADIAN FILM PREMIERE:

BLIND LOVE

A HOLOCAUST JOURNEY THROUGH POLAND WITH MAN'S BEST FRIEND

A CBC Documentary Channel Film
Narrated by Michael Enright

Blind Love recounts a trip to Poland of six blind Israelis and their guide dogs who took part in the annual March of the Living. The film poignantly captures the special bond between the blind individuals and their guide dog companions. **Blind Love** emphasizes the importance of building a society where every one is cherished – young and old, strong and weak, able and disabled – a world not filled with blind hate, but instead with blind love.

2015 Holocaust Education Week
SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 1
8:00 P.M.
CONGREGATION HABONIM,
5 GLEN PARK AVE.

Featuring three additional short films from the March of the Living Digital Archives: **Twice Liberated**, recounts survivor Joe Mandel's chance reunion with his American liberator. In **Reunions**, Sidney Zoltak reunites with the Polish rescuer. **Czeslawa & Olga** tells the story of a Polish woman who visits Israel to see, for the last time, the woman she saved.

March of the Living Digital Archive Project, produced by Naomi Wise of Garrison Creek Media, is a program of Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA, with the support of Citizenship & Immigration Canada, Multiculturalism Section & The Claims Conference.

Event co-sponsored by:

Jewish Winnipeggers raise funds to rescue Yazidi refugee families

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Last May, a number of members of Winnipeg's Jewish community launched Operation Ezra, a fundraising campaign to bring an endangered Yazidi family to Winnipeg, and it's been far more successful than the organizers could have imagined: it's raised more than $100,000 – enough to save four Yazidi families.

"Considering how successful our fundraising efforts have been, we are now considering further expanding the number of Yazidis we can bring to Winnipeg," said Operation Ezra committee member Michel Aziza. "This is a rare opportunity to do something really good in the world. These kind of opportunities don't come along very often in one's life."

The Yazidi people are an ethno-religious community based largely in northwestern Iraq. The ancient monotheistic religion they practise combines elements from a variety of traditions, including Gnostic Christianity, Judaism, Sufi Islam and Zoroastrianism. Due to a misinterpretation of the role that a peacock angel represents in their religion, they have often been labelled as devil worshippers and have been persecuted throughout much of their history by various Muslim groups in the region.

In the summer of 2014, the little-known Yazidis – who number about 700,000 – shot to international prominence for a short time when ISIS stormed into their region. Many Yazidis were slaughtered or enslaved. Many more fled to Mount Sinjar, where the United States and other western countries dropped supplies to help them survive until they could escape into the Kurdish area to the north or to refugee camps in Turkey. Many perished from starvation, dehydration and at the hands of ISIS.

There are currently about 180 Yazidis in Winnipeg, including Nafiya Naso whose family was one of the first to come to Winnipeg. She and her family arrived in Manitoba in 1999 thanks to the sponsorship of the Pembina Mennonite Fellowship Church in Morden in southern Manitoba. The family lived in Morden for three years before moving to Winnipeg.

Naso said she and her family were originally scared of associating with Jews.

Nafiya Naso

"We were taught by extremist Muslims in a refugee camp when we were growing up that Jews were monsters who killed innocent children," she said.

"We have learned since coming here that the Jewish community are among our best friends. Members of the Jewish community have been among the first to step up to help our people."

The plight of her brother and sister Yazidis in the Middle East came to the attention of the wider Jewish community about a year ago through the efforts of the year-old Winnipeg Friends of Israel, who invited Naso to speak at one of their programs.

"I learned about Nafiya and the plight of the Yazidi people last March from Yolanda [Papini-Pollock, a co-founder of the Winnipeg Friends of Israel] while chairing a Canadian Associates of Ben-Gurion University program," said Belle Jarniewski. "I was very moved. Being a child of Holocaust survivors, I can identify with the dire situation that the Yazidis find themselves in. What they are facing is a genocide. I felt a moral responsibility to help."

Jarniewski, Aziza, Papini-Pollock and a number of others decided to take action. They learned how to sponsor refugees and explored a number of different avenues. "We don't have a formal campaign," Aziza said. "We just started approaching people and asking for donations. We also had people approaching us. One individual from Alberta gave us $34,000, which will essentially cover the cost to sponsor one entire family."

Jarniewski said it costs $12,500 to sponsor one adult refugee, according to federal government regulations. And there are only a limited number of organizations (sponsorship agreement holders) who have signed sponsorship agreements with the government of Canada to help support refugees from abroad when they resettle in Canada, she said.

"They are generally religious, ethnic, community or service organizations. Private sponsor groups partner with them to bring refugees in. Our sponsorship agreement holder is the Mennonite Central Committee," she said.

"We have also been working through the Mennonite Fellowship Church in Morden, Calvary Temple in Winnipeg and, more recently, with the Jewish Child and Family Service in Winnipeg."

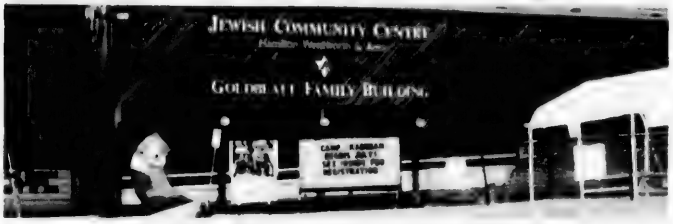
The families that Operation Ezra hopes to bring to Winnipeg currently live in a refugee camp in Turkey. These refugees range from a single young man, 18 years of age, to a family of eight.

"The refugees are living in appalling conditions at the UNHCR refugee camp where summer temperatures often reach 50 degrees Celsius," Jarniewski said. "The winter that lies ahead is going to be equally challenging. And there are no school facilities available for the children."

Despite funds being in place, Aziza said it will take between six and 18 months for the refugees to arrive in Canada. "We are going to be engaging as many people as we can to try to expedite the process," he said. "We are going to push as hard as we can to get them here as soon as we can. It is not safe for them in the camps." ■

To donate online, visit http://www.gofundme.com/savetheyazidis.
For more information, contact savetheyazidis@gmail.com

Board decides to sell Hamilton JCC building



The Ancaster facility opened in 1987. DEBRA DOWNEY HAMILTON COMMUNITY NEWS PHOTO

ABIGAIL CUKIER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, HAMILTON

The board of Hamilton's Jewish Community Centre has decided to sell its 28-year-old building due to dwindling membership, but its co-president, Lowell Richter, said he believes the move will result in renewal and revitalization for the institution.

Until the community settles on when and where to build a new facility, and how to fund it, the JCC will continue to run programs at other locations, using what Richter calls a "virtual model."

The JCC board of directors concluded that the costs associated with upkeep of the west-end facility were "not the best use of community funds," Richter recently announced at a community meeting.

"The current location was designed as a tennis club. It is too big and difficult for us to manage," he said. "We don't have the critical mass to support the current location."

Another drawback of the property is that the adjacent 30 acres of undeveloped land fall under the jurisdiction of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, which makes it, according to Richter, "extraordinarily limited as to what it can and can't support" in terms of allowable development and prospects for a sale.

He said he spent close to two years working with city planners to explore usage options for the greenbelt-designated land.

Richter would not divulge the number of current JCC members, but said that with a limited pool of funds to draw from and declining membership, the JCC can't sustain its seven-acre property, which includes facilities such as indoor tennis courts, a fitness room and squash courts.

But Richter wants to assure the community that the JCC will continue to serve it. Hamilton is currently home to about 5,000 Jews.

"We are not going away. We want to be stronger. We want to re-focus and realign ourselves with the realities of our community," he said.

"Our board has reached the conclusion that the JCC needs to build on our strengths and let go of the things that slow us down. In short, we need to reinvent ourselves, so that we can become more relevant to a greater number of people," Richter added. "What we do best, we will continue to do."

He said this includes the popular Camp Kadima day camp, the Morris Black Public Speaking Contest and Max Rotman Humanitarian Youth Awards, as well as cultural programs for Yom Hashoah and Yom Ha'atzmaut. These programs will be run at other locations in Hamilton until a new JCC building opens.

Over the coming months, the JCC board, along with other community stakeholders, will start to craft a vision for the future, Richter said.

"We want to have a [physical] footprint, but in a sustainable way. This might happen right away or it might be down the road," he said. "Many successful Jewish communities function in a campus-like environment. This is what we envision for our community as well, with the JCC acting as an anchor. Until then, we will follow the virtual model."

He told *The CJN* that plans were put forward in 2008 to renovate the current JCC, but the board couldn't get financial backing after the economy went into recession.

Richter isn't sure when the JCC will vacate the current facility, but programming there is scheduled until at least the end of this year.

In its heyday throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the JCC was located on Delaware Avenue in downtown Hamilton. When Jewish families and synagogues started to move west to Ancaster, Westdale and Dundas, the Delaware location was sold. In 1987, the JCC moved to its current location in a wooded valley on Lower Lions Club Road in Ancaster.

While he said he can't disclose details, Richter said there are parties interested in the current location.

The exact value of the property is uncertain, but its assessed value for property tax purposes was $2.3 million for 2015.

He said the decision to sell the building has invigorated board members.

"We can build it the way we want to build it and right-size it for us," he said. "The JCC is not closing. It is transitioning into something that's more viable, sustainable and efficient." ■

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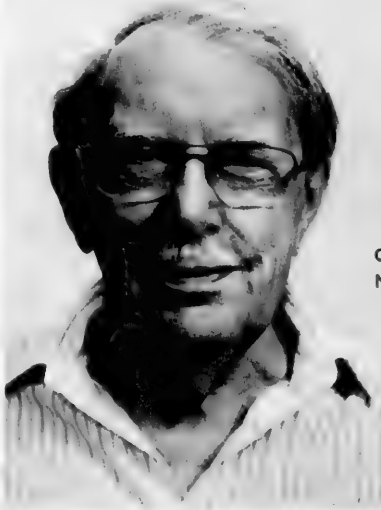

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 22, 2015

Updated dementia handbook aims for practicality

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Education is empowering for a person coping with caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia.

That's the idea behind *Dementia: A Caregiver's Guide*, a book published last month by Baycrest Health Sciences.

Geared to professional caregivers or family members caring for a relative, the book lays out strategies for dealing with 21 day-to-day health and lifestyle challenges often faced by people with dementia, and offers practical tips for preventing and managing them.

Dementia was co-written by Bianca Stern, executive director of culture, arts and innovation at Baycrest, and Nira Rittenberg, an occupational therapist with the Baycrest Geriatric Psychiatry Community Service, and was reviewed by about 20 health-care professionals at Baycrest.

"This is a very difficult disease and a long journey... We try to make [caregivers] their own navigators, to be able to cope [with these issues] in the day to day," said Rittenberg, who also runs support groups for adults caring for a parent with dementia.

She stressed that the guidebook can't be taken as "a cookie cutter formula," but rather a starting point from which caregivers can mould an approach that works for them.

Dementia is an expanded and re-named third edition of a resource initially published by Baycrest in 1999 called *Caring For Your Loved One*.

The new version includes sections on communication, eating, bathing, dressing and grooming, sex and intimacy, nourishing the spirit and navigating the care system, as well as three additional chapters, on travelling, sleep, and mouth and dental care.

Nira Rittenberg

> *This is a very difficult disease and a long journey... We try to make [caregivers] their own navigators, to be able to cope in the day to day*

There's sufficient research about dementia online that someone could spend "morning to night reading about it," Rittenberg said, but the Baycrest handbook is meant to be unique in that it tries to avoid inundating readers with information and scientific facts.

Instead, the book includes some basic facts about dementia – all of it sound and evidence-based, Rittenberg emphasized – but hones in on concrete strategies for dealing with specific issues.

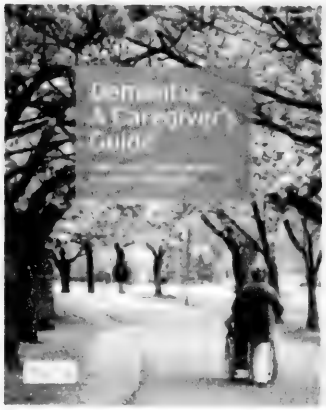
The chapter on safety and the home environment, for example, encompasses several sub-sections on ways to achieve home safety, such as avoiding too much change in the home, concrete tips for making the person's home safer and less stressful, and ways to prevent accidents.

In addition to updating content according to new best-practice standards for dementia management, Rittenberg explained, the caregiver handbook's latest iteration has modified certain elements that felt outdated, starting with the book's name.

"We got a lot of pushback from the former title, *Caring For Your Loved One*, because people said it doesn't recognize that someone might be caring for a person they don't love. And it's true, people care for others for different reasons –[such as] out of respect or because they have to. So we wanted to take away that piece of judgment around it," Rittenberg said.

The new edition also reflects the ways the approach to caregiving has changed in recent years

This includes both a greater understanding of how important the quality of care is to a dementia sufferer's physical and mental health, as well as recognition of the impact caregiving can have on the person administering it.



The book, therefore, has a section devoted to self-care for caregivers, and Rittenberg said she and Stern were careful to use language that is neither dictatorial nor preachy, to help caregivers navigate options without taking on undue stress.

People caring for relatives with dementia are often adult children sandwiched between caring for a sick parent while raising a family, she added, making the disease something of "a family illness."

Factors like this can make caregivers susceptible to mental health issues such as depression or anxiety.

"When I'm caring for a client [as an occupational therapist], their caregiver is as much my client as the person with dementia," she said.

The guidebook is being sold for $27.99 on the Baycrest website and in its gift shop, and Rittenberg said the ultimate goal is to also make it into a downloadable e-book. ■

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The 'trickle intifadah' that just won't stop

AVI ISSACHAROFF
JERUSALEM

Police and rescue workers at the scene of an attack at the Central Bus Station in Be'er Sheva, on Oct.18. One Israeli soldier died and many were injured. MEIR EVEN HAIM/FLASH90 PHOTO

If Israelis thought for a moment that the wave of terror attacks was weakening and may even cease, the recent events were a rude wake-up call. This is no run-of-the-mill spate of attacks, and sadly it may be a while before it subsides. It is no longer a "trickle" of sporadic attacks. The last several weeks have seen little respite from the terror attacks or attempted attacks. The "trickle" isn't stopping.

The Palestinians are calling it the Al Quds Intifadah. Of course there'll be those who say the current situation doesn't even come close to the bleakness of the two previous intifadahs, and they will probably be right. There may be a popular dimension to this intifadah, but it is still marginal. Even during Friday's "Day of Rage," only a few thousand people took to the streets of the West Bank. The turnout was so meagre that users on Hamas-affiliated Internet forums accused West Bank Palestinians of no longer bothering to leave their homes to confront the occupation forces and support the struggle to liberate Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Instead, we are witnessing a new kind of intifadah characterized by lone wolves, young knife-wielding Palestinians. Most are from East Jerusalem, but over the past week they've received a significant boost from the younger generation in Hebron.

Why has Hebron now rallied to the cause? First, we must point out that it would have been possible to find explanations had suicidal attackers emerged from other cities. The fact that attackers are not coming from other West Bank cities is surprising. Indeed, the markedly half-hearted commitment displayed by West Bank Palestinians in this semi-intifadah is one of the few positive trends that one can point to.

Like Jerusalem, Hebron is an easy place to carry out attacks. The terrorists do not need to leave a West Bank town or village and infiltrate Israel through checkpoints in order to find victims. Both are mixed cities, and in Hebron, in Area 2H, Palestinians and Israelis live side by side and intermix practically 24 hours a day.

The Temple Mount in Jerusalem and the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron are holy to both Judaism and Islam, and regretfully inspire sickening actions in the name of religion, or jihad. In addition, both cities contain a core of extremist ideologues who are prepared to take violent action against Jews.

Hebron has been known as a Hamas stronghold for dozens of years, and despite massive Israeli efforts in security and intelligence, and the Palestinian Authority's (PA) attempts to intercept attackers coming from there (including arrests of Hebron residents), there is no shortage of extremists who are prepared to die in order to kill Jews.

The bad news from Hebron has a silver lining. First, the rest of the West Bank is not rushing to join the melee. This stems from Palestinians' lack of appetite for a full-blown intifadah, but also from the efforts of PA President Mahmoud Abbas who, at least in terms of security co-ordination, continues to play by the rules. His security forces are making significant efforts to stop terror attacks that could lead to a full-scale conflagration in the West Bank; his troops have arrested Hamas operatives and even dispersed popular protests. Recently, for example, PA security forces quelled a demonstration that emanated from Bir Zeit University, near Ramallah. Protests near the settlement of Beit El have continued, but on a smaller scale. The bottom line is that security co-operation remains in place despite all of the stresses it's experienced.

The problem, as ever, is that we are living on borrowed time. Abbas' capacity to stem protests, including some by activists in his Fatah party, isn't assured for long. Eventually, the members of Fatah and its violent Tanzim movement will join the fray.

Until now, this has been an intifadah under at least partial control, but without some kind of diplomatic initiative or an effort to prevent escalation, it is only a matter of time before Israelis and Palestinians pass the point of no return.

Since an Arab-Palestinian-Israeli summit is still not on the horizon, for the time being, Israelis don't have much choice but to hunker down, prepare for more attacks, and hope things won't spiral utterly out of control. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

Both power and peace needed in Israel right now

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

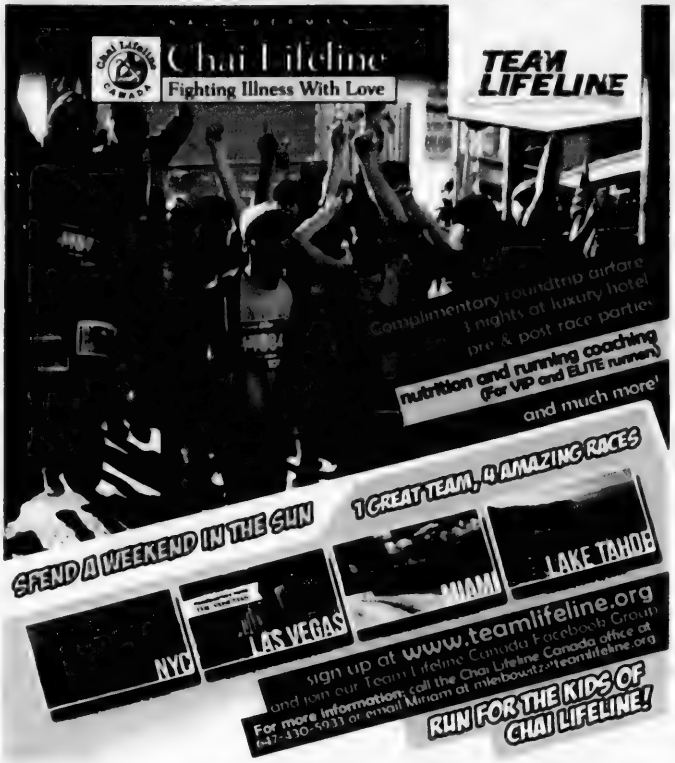
There is a solution, although it's not simple and not quick. It can be expressed in the Hebrew words *oz* (power) and shalom (peace).

Oz refers to power both physical and ethical. Military and civil power. Unity of our people. Preventing Israel from splitting into "tribes" ("settlers," "Tel-Avivians," "leftists," "haredim"). Supporting those who are on the front lines of the struggle. Determination to face the hardships associated with Israel's existence in the Middle East and willingness to pay a high price when necessary.

Shalom refers to maintaining our Jewish and universal ethical values, even when the other side does not. Continuing to extend the hand of peace (while the other hand holds a loaded gun), even when we are not certain there is anyone who will grasp it. A brave, unflinching look in the mirror to remind ourselves who we are, why we are here, and how we want to see ourselves. Managing to overcome the tension between the two commandments, "Remember what Amalek did to you" (Deuteronomy 25) and "The stranger who dwells with you… love him as yourself, because you were strangers in the Land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19).

The combination of *oz* and *shalom* is imperative, even in the case of Asraa Zidan Tawfik Abed, a 30-year-old mother of three, who on Oct. 9 brandished a large knife and tried to stab a Jewish soldier at the Central Bus Station in Afula.

It was an act of *oz* to stop her, to shoot her in the legs and prevent her from implementing her plot. At the same time, we also need an approach of shalom: to feel sorrow and pity that we have reached a situation in which an Arab mother of three leaves her children in order to stab a Jew; to wonder whether there was another way to neutralize the threat she presented; and to refrain from hate and fear toward Arabs just for being Arabs; and to continue to strive for peace with our neighbours. ■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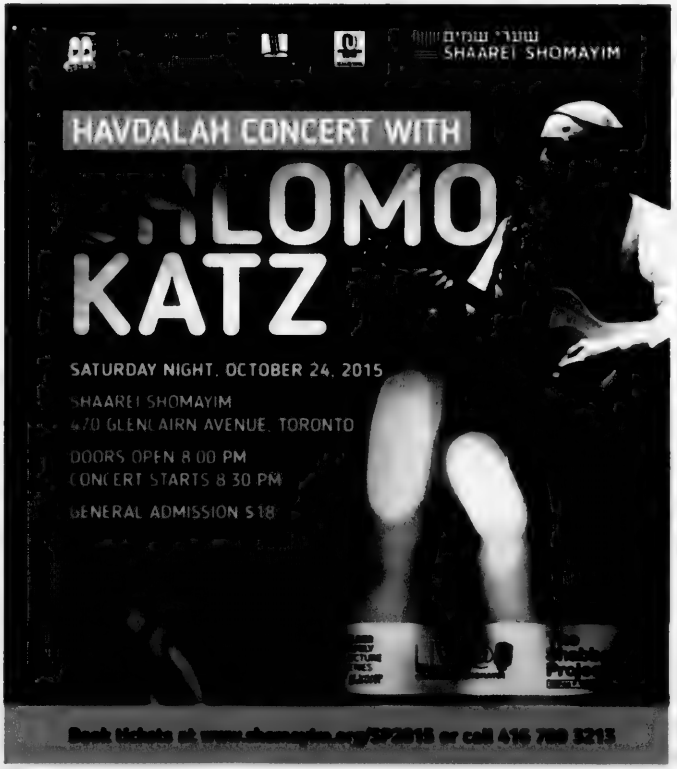

OPINION

Memo to the CBC: Israeli lives matter

Gerald Steinberg

> *Many media reports rely heavily on political groups that press their agendas under the facade of expertise in human rights.*

The gruesome routine is familiar. Israelis are hunted down by Arab terrorists, and we are condemned for defending our lives. In the media, headlines focus as least as much on the murderers as on their victims, and when a knife-wielding Palestinian teenager is shot during his rampage, it's referred to as a "summary execution." A recent *New York Times* headline read "Stabbings, and deadly responses, add to Israel's security challenge" – describing the responses, and not the attacks, as "deadly."

As is generally the case, many media reports rely heavily on political groups that press their agendas under the facade of expertise in human rights. The *New York Times* quoted a number of such groups including Amnesty International, which accused Israel of using "excessive force" to stop the attacks. Similarly, activists from the Israeli NGO known as B'tselem and the Palestinian group Al Haq are quoted as if they were experts on international law and ballistics.

However, as is very often the case, the officials of these organizations have neither the information nor the professional credentials to make such judgments, and by giving them legitimacy, journalists are simply perpetuating the myths. Such compilations of quotes from selected sources and pseudo-experts, cut and pasted into the automatic media framing based on Palestinian victimization and Israeli aggression, have largely replaced serious journalism with professional standards.

In many cases, the Canadian media is no exception to this pattern. In listening to CBC Radio news programs, we hear the same distortions, biases, and clichés found elsewhere. (In my years of observing the hundreds of foreign journalists in Israel, the degree to which reporters travel in packs, automatically repeating each other's slogans and frameworks, stands out strongly.)

For example, on Oct. 9, Margaret Evans reported from Jerusalem on CBC Radio's flagship *World at Six* news program, presenting the emotionally laden version of Palestinian victimization that she has used for many years. On a day when two Israeli men were viciously stabbed to death in Jerusalem's Old City in front of their families during the holiday of Sukkot, she instead chose to report from Ramallah, focusing on Palestinians "frustrations" and the funeral of a 19-year-old who, she said was "shot dead by Israeli security forces," only adding as an afterthought that he was the murderer who stabbed Aharon Banita and Nehemia Lavi. CBC listeners heard her emotion-laden voice, describing the anger "starting to burn bright again" among youth who confront armed Israeli soldiers at "checkpoints."

Evans either doesn't know the history or doesn't care – she simply echoes Palestinian propaganda lines, as she did during previous stints in Israel many years ago. For her, there is no background prior to the 1967 "occupation," the checkpoints have nothing to do with security necessary to prevent terror, the hateful anti-Israel incitement is erased, and the conflict is reduced to a "game of cat and mouse" between frustrated Palestinian protesters and powerful Israeli soldiers.

Later in her report, she added some Israeli voices for artificial balance, asserting, with no evidence at all, that the "stabbings have spooked the Israeli leadership." The murdered Israelis remained anonymous to Evans, while listeners were told that the "people mourning them are Jewish settlers who want a foothold in the Muslim Quarter just up the road from the Al Aqsa compound." This allegation, like the others, has no relation to journalism.

Evans ended with a string of clichés, invoking the "cycle of violence," which has created "dark seemingly immovable matter of a stagnating conflict turning out new generations of conflict" – whatever that means.

The assessment of the professional qualifications and actions of CBC reporters, and actions to be taken in response, are issues for Canadians to consider. But the lives of Israelis are deeply affected by these distorted and harmful portrayals in the international media. ■

I hate my gun. I am grateful for my gun.

DONNIEL HARTMAN
JERUSALEM

Israelis practice at a firing range in an arms & ammunition shop in the Talpiot neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Amid a wave of stabbing attacks across Israel, the Public Security Ministry said it has seen a sharp rise in civilians renewing permits to obtain firearms.
OREN ZIV/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

My gun is my barometer. It has been in my possession for 37 years. Most of the time it rests securely in my safe, taken out only when I need to pass my re-certification, or to be put in secure storage in a gun store when I travel overseas. It is my barometer, for every few years I feel the need to carry it on me (for which I have a permit). Every few years my sense of safety and that of my family and my fellow citizens is undermined, as the streets on which we walk and live become the frontlines. It is my barometer for the moment when I no longer know if the person with whom I share these streets is there to pursue a normal life or to pursue me and those around me.

I hate my gun, but I am grateful for it too. I don't feel that I have a constitutional right to bear arms, and my gun is not meant to protect my civil liberties from a tyrannical, abusive government. I do feel, however, that I have an inalienable right to live and to do what is necessary to defend myself, my family, and those around me from those who desire to murder us.

I hate my gun, because I don't want to live in a world in which everyday citizens need to be responsible for their own safety. I hate my gun, because my life's work as a teacher and rabbi is geared to fostering kindness, decency, mutual respect, and hope. I hate my gun because it reminds me that my family is not safe and my life's work is far from realization. There is no part in my soul which wants to harm another human being. There is no part in my soul which wants to see an other as an enemy. The opposite is the case. I am an unrepentant optimist who believes in the inherent decency of humankind and in the possibility of peace and rapprochement between Israel and our Palestinian neighbours.

I believe that there is nothing inherently flawed in Judaism or Islam which forces us to be at war with each other. I believe the opposite to be the case, and a significant portion of my work is to develop new levels of understanding, respect, and learning to and from each other. I hate my gun.

I am grateful for my gun. I hate that I need it, but I am grateful for the fact that when I do, I have the ability to carry it. I hate the fact that the people I love are in danger, but I love the fact that neither I nor my people are helpless victims anymore. I love the gift of Israel, that if and when I need it, I do not merely have the right but the ability to protect myself.

I know that my gun is not the answer. I know that my gun alone will not give me the safety and security for which I yearn. I know that my gun is dangerous. I know that it can delude me into a false sense of power, wherein as long as my gun is bigger the status quo is sustainable. As long as my gun is bigger, I don't have to take chances for peace. I know that my gun can blind me to the feelings and rights of others. It can make me acutely sensitive to my security needs without any reciprocal sensitivity to the needs of others. I fear my gun and what it can do to me and my people.

> *I hate my gun because it reminds me that my family is not safe.*

I need my gun. I know that the occupation has gone on for too long. I know that an occupation is justified only to the extent that one does everything in one's power to bring it to an end, and I don't believe we have done so. I don't believe that we have done everything in our power to make the lives of the Palestinian people as free, safe, and prosperous as their rights as human beings demand. Is our failure the cause for the recent stabbings and murders? I believe that the perpetrators of evil are the ones who bear primary responsibility for their actions, and the murder of civilians as they sit in buses and walk the streets of their cities is nothing short of evil. We Israelis must take responsibility for our moral failures and do everything in our power to rectify them; however, the responsibility for terrorism lies within the terrorist and the society which glorifies it. As long as they do, I need my gun.

My gun is my barometer, and today I am walking with my gun. I read the lies of the so-called plot of the Jews to destroy al-Aqsa and am saddened at the ease with which my neighbours can be rallied to kill and be killed to "redeem" it with blood. I am saddened that my neighbours ennoble and glorify anyone who murders my fellow citizens and grant them and their families' financial rewards far in excess of what they could ever have dreamed of earning peacefully. I am saddened when instead of taking responsibility for children who have chosen the path of murder, they lie to themselves and transform these children into innocent victims.

I dream of two peoples living side by side in peace and security. I know that there is much that I and my people have done to undermine this dream. But I also know that too many within Palestinian society have yet to truly accept that this is my home too, and have yet to make the strategic commitment to peaceful co-existence between us. There is no political solution on the near horizon, and whether there will be one in the more distant future at all, will require much work and transformation on both sides. I fear that the current reality will only weaken our will to even explore such fantasies, let alone contemplate steps to even allow it to be put back on the table. I still live with hope and continue my life's work to create a better future, but until that day comes, sadly and tragically, from time to time, I will carry my gun. ■

Donniel Hartman is president of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem residents learning how to defend themselves

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, JERUSALEM

After weeks of non-stop knife attacks, the mood in Jerusalem is grim. But many Jerusalemites are finding ways to respond proactively to the mood of terror in the city. They're stocking up on pepper spray and signing up for martial arts classes, proving their desire to keep right on living in the nation's heart.

Roi Walther, with Royce Gracie jiu jitsu, led a seminar Oct. 12 in Jerusalem's Sacher Park. His goal was to give participants "the courage to walk on the streets... They know what to do if something happens."

Walther offers a common-sense approach. The minute you identify that an attacker is approaching, Walther says, "Scream 'Knife!' and point at him."

Pointing is crucial, he says. "You can scream 'Knife!' but nobody knows who has a knife. Pointing at the person, you can save others' lives."

Don't back away, he adds. "He's running forward, you're running backward. He's faster." Instead, focus on breaking the attacker's hand holding the knife. "Nothing else will work... if you choke him, he will stab you."

Krav maga, the Israeli martial art, is also taking off. Ruth Kilner, who made aliyah from Scotland 11 years ago, signed up for classes with a group of local women following the Har Nof synagogue attack last year. That attack really hit home, she says. "It's just so close to our reality."

Kilner lists two principles to using krav maga in a knife attack. First, "You attack, you don't defend." And second, "You attack the hand that's holding the knife. That's the dangerous bit. You can beat on someone's chest as long as you want, but if he's stabbing you with a knife, there's only so long you can last."

She also carries pepper spray when she travels outside her neighbourhood, though that's rare now. "I'm not leaving Ramot if I can help it. We're trying to just stay close to home."

An ultra-marathon runner, Kilner bought the spray to defend herself against wild animals, never dreaming she'd need it so close to home.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Roi Walther, left, demonstrates self-defence strategies with a student at a one-day seminar in Jerusalem's Sacher Park.

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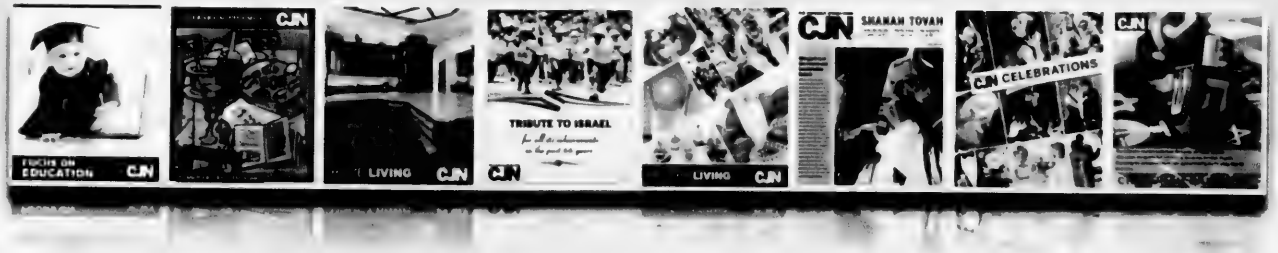

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Israelis turn to pepper spray, krav maga for protection

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Former lone soldier Jeremy Nye has launched an initiative to make pepper spray available at a low cost or free. Following the Har Nof stabbing, he collected donations and distributed 1,000 cans of pepper spray.

Through his website, pepperspray.co.il, he has launched a new fundraising campaign. "We have thousands of messages from people all over the country," requesting free and subsidized pepper spray, says Nye, a four-year oleh from the Fort Lauderdale, Fla., area.

Nye's site also offers information about where to buy pepper spray throughout the country. But calls from *The CJN* to Jerusalem-area stores turned up only one that had the spray available. Every other store was out of stock.

While Kilner is sticking close to home, Laurie Tamres, an olah of five years, must travel by bus each day for work. She calls this daily travel a "calculated risk." "We live with it all the time, but right now it's at a very heightened level."

Though she has no choice about whether to travel around the city, she has switched to a different bus stop. "I could catch the 13 bus in several places," she told *The CJN*. "I choose to catch it up by the president's house. It makes sense to me, I know there's a lot of security around there." She's planning to attend a one-day krav maga seminar.

> *People in this country don't stop living their lives ... They're going to keep living their lives no matter what happens, because that's what we do in Israel.*

Like Kilner, Tamres also carries pepper spray, upgrading recently from a small key-chain spray to a larger, military-grade spray. "It sprays a lot further... it's a lot more powerful."

But it's not enough just to tuck it in a pocket or backpack. "Even during the day, I have it in my hands. I definitely have it ready to go."

Few who carry the spray have had to use it. But on Oct. 13, in Jerusalem, civilian Matan Shukrun used his personal pepper spray to help subdue a terrorist who had driven his car into a bus shelter. However, on Oct. 11, three girls were allegedly taken into police custody after spraying an Arab store worker without cause.

Walther cautions against overconfidence in carrying pepper spray. "I'm not a big believer," he says. A well-known study has shown that when police officers tried to draw a weapon against an attacker less than 10 metres away, they couldn't. "The only weapon that can work [at that distance] is your body."

Nye does provide training whenever he gives out pepper spray. He is aware of its limitations, but believes it's valuable for a sense of security. "That's very important when people are freaking out and scared."

However, one former Torontonian, who requested anonymity, remains skeptical. "I think all this pepper spray will make a lot of money for the importers and not help, except to give a dangerous false sense of security." From videos of attacks, he says it's clear that few victims have enough warning. "I understand how [pepper spray] could be helpful against a rapist... But there is literally no defence from an Arab coming up from behind or the side."

Israel's government announced Oct. 14 that it would loosen the nation's strict gun-control laws in "high priority" areas, including haredi neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. Since many haredim have never served in the army, they were previously ineligible for gun permits.

Despite the ongoing attacks, Nye loves that "people in this country don't stop living their lives. I'm seeing videos from all over Jerusalem, showing people on the bus, on the train, singing, cheering. They're going out and dancing, they're not going to stay at home. They're going to keep living their lives no matter what happens, because that's what we do in Israel." ■

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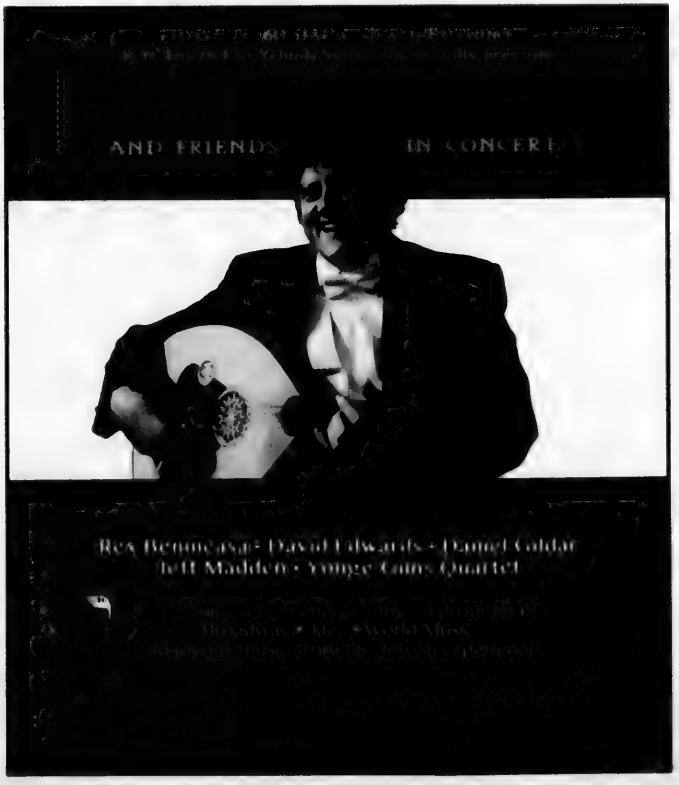

Anti-terror strategy is ineffectual – and also crucial

JUDAH ARI GROSS
JERUSALEM

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) are sending an additional 300 soldiers to assist police in Jerusalem, the army said last Thursday. Six companies of cadets, amounting to several hundred soldiers in officer's training, have already been sent to reinforce police in cities around the country.

Some of the soldiers already in place, and the additional ones joining them this week, come from non-infantry units, predominantly the Military Police and the Homefront Command, an outfit that provides search and rescue services and emergency response in times of war, the police and IDF said.

It is the latest in a number of measures trotted out by the security cabinet in response to the stabbing attacks that have rocked Israel in recent weeks and sent the population into a panic. Another notable and even more dramatic move by the cabinet early last week was to put in place a so-called "breathing closure" around East Jerusalem neighbourhoods, setting up checkpoints at the entrances and exits but allowing the resident population a level of mobility.

An Israeli soldier stands guard in the Orthodox neighbourhood of Mea Shearim, Jerusalem on Oct. 19. The IDF is assisting police in Jerusalem. YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

The purpose of these closures and IDF reinforcements has been twofold: on the one hand, there are the tactical and operational benefits of these checkpoints and reinforcements. And on the other hand, there is the matter of public perception, and the need for the Israeli political leadership to project to its citizens that things are under control.

The majority of the attackers since the beginning of October have indeed come from East Jerusalem neighbourhoods, and the largest number hailed from Jabel Mukaber, which was also the hometown of the terrorists who attacked a Har Nof synagogue last year, killing five. For the past year, young men from the city have also thrown rocks and Molotov cocktails at residents of the adjacent Jewish Armon Hanatziv neighbourhood on a nightly basis.

The problem, however, is that truly separating Arab neighbourhoods from Jewish ones in East Jerusalem is nigh impossible. That, ironically enough, is due to the Israeli government's efforts for the past 40 years to unify the city, Marik Shtern, a researcher at the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, told *The Times of Israel*.

Since capturing East Jerusalem in the 1967 Six Day War, the government set out to "unify Jerusalem and to combine the two sides' economies," Shtern said.

And in that effort, the government was successful. In the early 1970s, Armon Hanatziv was built side by side with Jabel Mukaber. The two neighbourhoods share playgrounds and clinics and supermarkets. Pisgat Zeev and Shuafat are equally close and intermeshed.

And as a result, in barely 24 hours, the "breathing closure" on East Jerusalem failed more than once. The attack outside of Jerusalem's central bus station on Oct. 14 was carried out by a resident of Ras al-Amud; hours later, four residents of East Jerusalem firebombed a Border Police base in Atarot.

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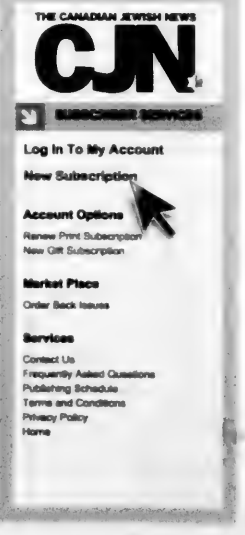

Full lockdown of East Jerusalem has never happened

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While Israel could perhaps close off the neighbourhoods to cars, that would not necessarily stop individuals from leaving. "OK, you closed off a road," Shtern said. "But people can't walk? They can't ride bikes?"

In the short term, the only way Israel could entirely ban East Jerusalem residents from West Jerusalem or other Israeli cities would be a massive deployment of police or soldiers into the neighbourhoods' main streets, Shtern said.

However, he admitted, "I work more to bring people together than keep them apart."

A full lockdown of East Jerusalem has never been implemented in the 48 years it has been under Israeli control, not even during the first and second intifadahs. Though there have been lockdowns and curfews in West Bank cities, even these have been rare and never lasted more than 24 to 48 hours.

And today, not only would a true closure be immensely difficult to implement, it could also have dramatic unintended consequences, Shtern said. Not only would it be severely damaging to East Jerusalem residents, it would be detrimental to West Jerusalem as well.

Approximately 50 per cent of workers from East Jerusalem are employed in West Jerusalem and some West Bank settlements,which is somewhere between 30,000 and 35,000 people. If those people suddenly could not go to work, the results would be dire for all of Jerusalem's economy, Shtern said.

The purpose of the "breathing closure" can therefore be seen as largely symbolic.

"[The government] wants to show the Jewish population that it is doing something," Shtern said.

Even Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan, who, along with Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, has been one of the most vocal supporters of the closure, has admitted that it will not be perfect.

"Can I say that this 100 per cent guarantees that nobody will enter Jerusalem or possibly acquire some weapon they can use to stab people? No," Erdan told Israel Radio when the closures were announced last week.

In addition to the IDF soldiers who are already assisting law enforcement, the Israel Prison Service also decided last week to put some 400 prison guards at the Israel Police's disposal.

Tel Aviv's police department alone received approximately 100 soldiers, most of them officer cadets, who will assist in patrolling public spaces such as the Dizengoff Center mall and the outdoor Carmel Market, Channel 2 reported.

Additional law enforcement in cities around the country will potentially act as a deterrent to would-be attackers and will allow for a quicker response to attacks.

However, these actions too can be seen for their symbolic as much as for their operational value. They provide a sense of security in a time when attacks have come in large and small cities and suburbs around the country in both residential and commercial areas.

As of 2014, the Israel Police had close to 30,000 full-time officers and nearly 70,000 volunteers. Though an additional 700-1,000 soldiers will certainly assist police officers, they amount to a very small percentage of the total law enforcement in Israel.

That the additional soldiers and "breathing closure" of East Jerusalem are operationally ineffectual does not diminish their role in this escalating rash of violence.

In light of the recent attacks, Israelis have been on edge. An IDF officer fired his weapon inside of a moving train on Oct. 15 after passengers saw a "suspicious" person and shouted, "Terrorist!" No terrorist was found on the train, but several people were lightly injured when the train's emergency brakes kicked in.

Hours later, the Israel Police conducted a massive manhunt, employing a helicopter and shutting down major highways in Tel Aviv, after reports came in of another "suspicious" vehicle, driven by two East Jerusalem residents. The Shin Bet interrogated the pair and found no evidence that they had planned to carry out a terrorist attack –they were only electricians out on a job. ■

PA is engaged in a policy of incitement, CIJA says

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

They include condemning terrorism; taking security action to stop terror attacks; denouncing anti-Jewish conspiracy theories; and "cracking down on Palestinian religious officials, media, social media, and others who call for jihad, especially those encouraging Palestinian teenagers to commit suicide attacks."

One particularly bone-chilling video, released by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) shows a cleric in Gaza brandishing a knife and citing Islamic scripture to justify the stabbing of Jews.

CIJA also asked its supporters to email Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Opposition Leader Isaac Herzog to let them know "Israelis are not alone."

CIJA chief executive officer Shimon Fogel said "we are asking the community to engage politically and with the UN." Fogel said Ban had taken a "ridiculous position" that called on Israel to investigate the deaths of Palestinians, but had not mentioned the terror attacks.

Fogel was also scathing in his criticism of media reports from the region, which had defaulted to describing events as a "cycle of violence, as if there's no beginning or critical path."

He said the Palestinian Authority was engaged in a policy of incitement, which included the unfounded claim that Israel was threatening to destroy the mosque on the Temple Mount or change the status quo regarding prayers on the holy site.

Not only is that patently false, but the government of Israel had taken the step of prohibiting cabinet ministers from visiting the site, in a bid to de-escalate tension, Fogel said.

The media also incorrectly reported "this trope of Palestinians as despairing of peace, the peace process and economic opportunities. Journalists have really failed on this one."

It was the PA president, Mahmoud Abbas, who appeared in the United Nations recently and declared the Oslo peace process was dead and that he would not be bound by it, Fogel noted.

"We're really frustrated that the media was looking for every opportunity to depict Israel in as negative way as possible," he said.

In a telephone conference call last week, Israel's consul general for Toronto and Western Canada, DJ Schneeweiss, suggested supporters of Israel could take several steps. "Become knowledgeable" about the situation and take to social media to inform friends and colleagues of the facts, he said.

He suggested that Canadians support charities that aid victims of terror, hold solidarity events, prayer vigils and visit Israel to convey first-hand a message of support.

> *We're really frustrated that the media was looking for every opportunity to depict Israel in as negative way as possible.*

Rabbi Reuben Poupko was part of the Canadian Rabbinic Caucus delegation delivering a letter to the Palestinian diplomats. He told *The CJN* that Abbas' speech at the UN gave the green light to Palestinians to undertake violent attacks. He rejected Palestinian leadership's claims that Israel was changing the status quo on the Temple Mount, saying it was the Palestinians who denied the right of Jews to pray there and who "denied the history of the place.

"That calls into question the Palestinian capability of accepting the Jewish presence in the Holy Land," he said.

Meanwhile, at least two Toronto synagogues hosted prayer services and *shiurim* (lessons) to honour the terror victims. An evening of remembrance was held at Yeshivat Or Chaim, while Kol Torah Congregation hosted an evening of prayer for the victims.

In Hamilton, Temple Anshe Sholom, Beth Jacob Synagogue and the Adas Israel Congregation co-hosted an evening of solidarity, prayer and information in conjunction with several Hamilton-area Jewish organizations.

Canadian Friends of Magen David Adom, which supports emergency services in Israel, called on its supporters "to remind everyone that all Israeli ambulances must constantly be re-stocked with emergency and medical supplies as well as kept in an ever-ready emergency mode. We are asking for everyone's co-operation and support in helping us fund the continuous flow of these crucial life-saving provisions assuring that no life is placed in danger due to dwindling supplies," the Canadian office stated.

And Kari Zalik, national manager of student affairs for the Rothberg International School at Hebrew University, said "All the students, after the chagim [holidays], were immediately sat down and given a security briefing on situational awareness."

None of the approximately 25 Canadians studying in the program, nor their parents, have indicated they wish to come home early, she added. ■

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Bright future for Ontario university graduates

NEWS CANADA

Ontario appears to be recovering and headed for growth after years of economic challenges, improving the outlook for both the employment and earnings of university graduates, according to a new report, *University Works*.

The report, newly released by an economist with the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), says the unemployment rate for university graduates in February 2015 was 4.2 per cent – the lowest among the population.

"In fact, university graduates experienced the highest employment growth of any educational attainment group over the last decade," says Patrick Deane, COU chair and president of McMaster University. "They are getting jobs related to their skills, and on average Ontario University graduates earn 58 per cent more than graduates from other Ontario post-secondary programs."

The report says Ontario university graduates consistently outperform the rest of the population in employment and earning outcomes. That's true for all ages, including recent graduates.

Citing data from Statistics Canada's National Household Survey, the report says the average high school grad earned $38,808 (during the last year data was available), while the average Ontario college grad earned $47,706, and the average university grad earned $75,396.

"When lifetime earnings and employment rates are considered, a university education is still one of the most resilient and personally fulfilling investments a person can make," says Deane. ■

To read the University Works report, visit www.cou.on.ca.

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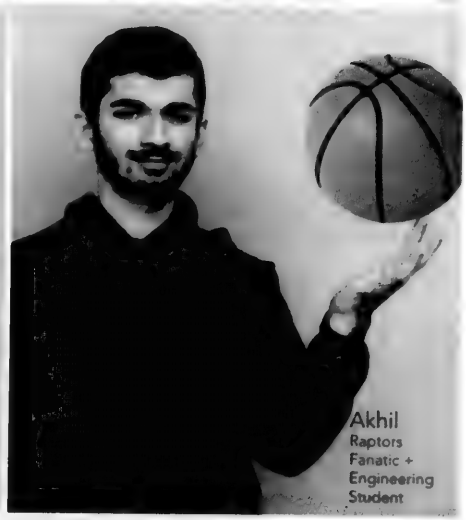

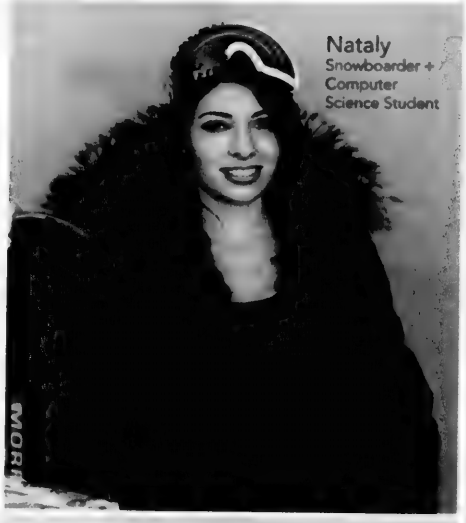

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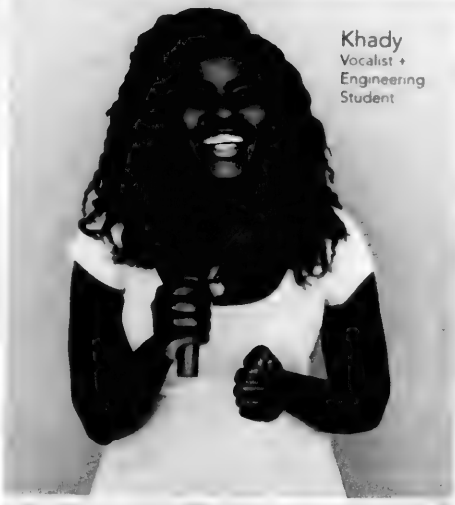

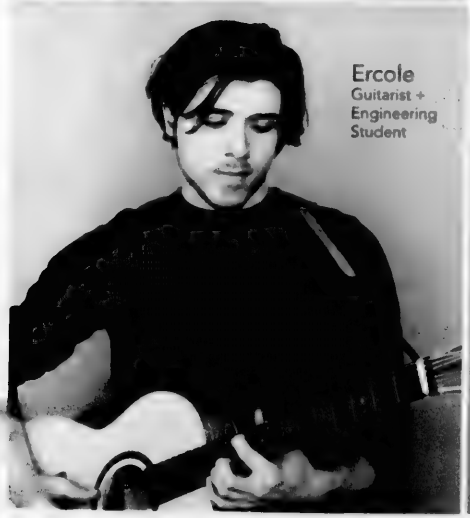

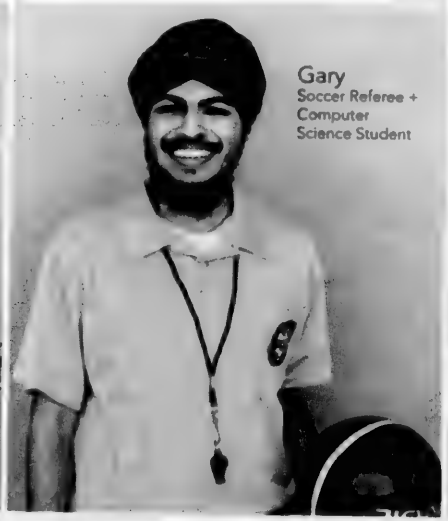

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Lassonde students study entrepreneurship in Israel

A group of students from the Lassonde School of Engineering at York University spent this past summer taking part in an intensive entrepreneurship program at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa.

Twenty-four graduates spent three weeks immersing themselves in Israel's entrepreneurial culture, learning business lessons from professors and CEOs and exchanging ideas with young Israelis.

"The summer experience at Technion has quickly become one of the flagship programs offered at Lassonde. The quality of academic instruction at this world-class institution is unmatched and the "dream it, do it" culture of the society is infectious," says Janusz Kozinski, founding dean of the Lassonde School of Engineering.

"Most importantly, each one of the students returned inspired to see the world differently and ready to imagine their own entrepreneurial ideas to solve great challenges."

The students spent their first week of the program learning the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and commercialization. They then departed Haifa to visit technology startups, entrepreneurship incubators and venture capital firms located across Israel, including in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

The opportunity to study entrepreneurial success stories in-person from the architects of an economic model that's often called the "Start-up Nation," was an unbelievable experience for these aspiring entrepreneurs. Israel has more technology startups and attracts more venture capital per capita than any other country in the world.

"It's like learning magic from Albus Dumbledore, straight from the horse's mouth," says Amal Dave, a second-year Lassonde student who took part in the program. "Over these three weeks, we learned how to be an entrepreneur. We learned to be business people from experts in that field.

"We visited various startup companies and met many CEOs, [and we were] stunned by their simplicity and passion for their work. No one cared about wearing formal clothes or working in a fancy workplace. All they cared about was their company and the people they worked with," Dave says.

This summer entrepreneurship program fits perfectly in the Lassonde School's ethos of hands-on learning.

Rendering of Lassonde School of Engineering at York University

The curriculum of the Lassonde School focuses on teaching a breadth as well as depth of knowledge, together with a hands-on approach to learning.

It is upending the traditional classroom structure to give students a chance to test out and practise real-world skills. In their new home on the York University campus, The Bergeron Centre for Engineering Excellence, for example, there are zero lecture halls. Students can increasingly take lectures whenever and wherever they want online, but while in the classroom they are focused on solving problems in small groups with fellow students and professors.

The entrepreneurship program delivered in partnership with Technion extends this concept of active learning, and allows students to absorb more in three weeks than many students will learn over three years of lectures.

"Those three weeks in Israel were probably the best of my life so far," Dave says. "We saw some amazing sights, we learned some very valuable lessons, and we formed some bonds that will last a lifetime." ■

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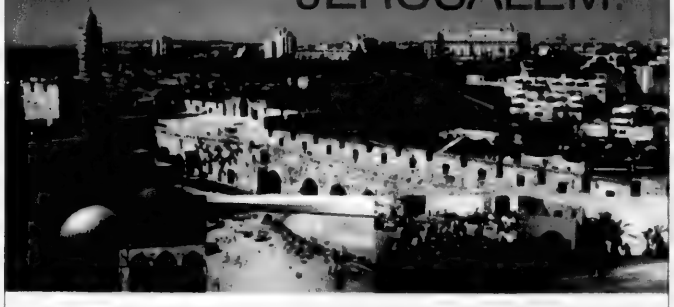

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Jewish Life

Athletes aim for the top

Joel Dembe won a bronze medal at the Parapan Am Games.

HOLLY GINSLER
Special to The CJN

Two Canadian athletes achieved their dreams in August winning medals in the Parapan Am Games in Toronto.

Alison Levine won a silver medal in mixed pairs in boccia, a precision ball sport related to lawn bowling.

And Joel Dembe won a bronze medal in men's doubles wheelchair tennis. He and national team member Philippe Bedard beat out the United States' Steve Baldwin and John Rydberg. Dembe also competed in the men's singles and finished in the top eight after losing to Argentina's Gustavo Fernandez.

Levine, 24, was born and raised in Montreal. At 12 she started exhibiting symptoms that led to the diagnosis of a degenerative neuromuscular disorder that causes weakness in all her muscles and also affects her breathing.

She enrolled in various sports including therapeutic horseback riding. When that became too dangerous, she tried wheelchair basketball and then wheelchair rugby. She eventually began to play boccia, the only sport suited to her level of disability

Dembe, 31, who lives in Hamilton, was born with a spinal tumour. It was removed at a very young age but left him partially paralyzed. During his childhood, he became active in sports and played track and field, sledge hockey, baseball and golf. He was introduced to wheelchair tennis at 13 by a former top Canadian player, Frank Peter Jr.

"I took to the sport right away," Dembe says. "I had eye-hand co-ordination and the ability to push my chair fast, which helped."

Dembe went to high-performance junior tennis camps and entered world competitions in Europe and North America during high school. He competed around the world and became the top ranked junior in Canada.

Levine has also competed nationally and internationally. She is known for her powerhouse strength and aggressive playing style. Within two weeks of starting boccia, she was recruited to the provincial team along with her current doubles partner, Marco Dispaltro. Within three months she and her partner became the Canadian doubles champions. After six months, Levine was selected to be a part of the national team.

"I firmly believe that my sports background has contributed to my immediate success in boccia. Right from the start, I understood the commitment and dedication that would be required to become an elite level athlete, and I was ready for it," Levine says.

> *I took to the sport right away.*

Levine is now ranked second in Canada, ninth overall in the world and the first woman in the world to reach this status. She competes in the BC4 category for athletes with severe disabilities affecting the whole body. She spends four five-hour days a week in the gym training and practising. She also spends many hours with her coach studying videos of past games, viewing her opponents' movements and strategies.

Levine likes boccia mostly because of how quickly the game can change.

"With one shot, your whole game plan can go out the window. You can expect some situations, but then someone will make a crazy shot and you're suddenly up against the time limit. You only have a few seconds to analyze, decide and execute," she says.

Dembe, meanwhile, attended Brock University and studied sports administration but still played tennis on the side. He started working with different tennis coaches and refined his game. He developed his strength working out at a gym and began travelling on his own to different world competitions. By the time he finished university, he was ranked in the top five in Canada.

In 2010, he decided to elevate his game so that he could represent Canada at the London 2012 Paralympics. At that time, he was ranked number 4 in Canada. He left his job working in a financial institution as a market analyst to focus entirely on wheelchair tennis.

Dembe won tournaments in Mexico, California, Vancouver and Montreal. He competed at the 2011 Guadalajara Parapan American Games and became the top player in Canada in 2011. He competed in four continents on his way to getting a spot in the London 2012 Paralympics. Unfortunately, in London he lost in the first round to one of the top British players in singles.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46

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Flawed characters seen against backdrop of Israel's first years

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Young Israeli authors are creating a stir of late, calling a great deal of positive attention to themselves and to their imaginative works.

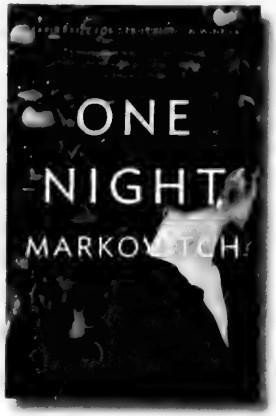
Last month, *JTA* published a story about "seven acclaimed Israeli expatriate writers" who are establishing themselves as talented literary figures. Some months before the *JTA* story, *Forward* literary writer Beth Kisileff wrote a story that was titled, rather emphatically, "Eight New Israeli Writers You Need To Read Right Now."

Like Israeli society in general, many young Israeli writers give a place of high honour to fearlessness in seeking and recounting truth, as they see it. And, in pursuit of that truth, they often assiduously dissect the core stories of the founding of the country as taught to them by the older generations.

Although she was not included in either of the above feature stories, Ayelet Gundar-Goshen is among the new generation of authors being lauded by Israeli critics. Gundar-Goshen is an award-winning author who has written or co-written several screenplays and TV series. At the age of 33, she is an experienced writer with a diverse writing corpus to her credit.

One Night, Markovitch is Gundar-Goshen's first novel. It was well received and widely acclaimed in Israel as a stirring, richly depicted literary achievement for which the young author received the Sapir Prize for Debut Fiction. Panoramic in scope, bold in its telling, *One Night, Markovitch* is an epic tale of the founding of the State of Israel. It begins prior to the creation of the Jewish state, during World War II, when the Jews of Mandatory Palestine were trying to build a new society even as they were offering their assistance to defeat the Nazis in Europe. The story ends sometime after the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

But a novelist in the pursuit of truth will likely tread a different path than, say, a historian. Thus, while the sweep of the novel is commendably wide, covering the full expanse of key epochal events in the rise of the fledgling state, Gundar-Goshen introduces us to literary characters, each of whom is deeply flawed, in some cases even psychopathic, or just plain lacking the fundamentals of conventional, normal behaviour.



One Night, Markovitch
Ayelet Gundar-Goshen
Translated by Sondra Silverston

Pushkin Press

The core of the plot is based upon the effort during World War II to rescue Jewish women from Nazi Europe by arranging marriages for them and bringing them to Mandatory Palestine as wives of men already resident there. Once the "couple" arrived in Palestine, the arranged marriage would be summarily dissolved by the rabbinate.

But one of the new instant husbands, Yaacov Markovitch, is so captivated by his "wife's" overwhelming beauty that he rejects his role as faux husband and refuses to grant her a divorce. He clings to the chimeral hope that he and the beautiful Bella Zeigerman will one day transform into a truly loving couple. But she is abject in her complete rejection of Markovitch. She is cold, unfeeling and constantly cross with him. Marcovitch sleeps alone on the sofa clinging to Bella's nightgown but never to her.

The myriad consequences of Marcovitch's reversal of course – his "sin" as it is sometimes called – resound throughout the book and hammer away at the tarnished, bent metal of the story until the very end.

Marcovitch's attachment to the feeble, frail hope of requited love is likely more than a description of the man's most compelling character trait. It probably stands as a metaphor by Gundar-Goshen for a far more significant relationship: that of the modern Jewish People to the modern Land of Israel. She implies this relationship in an exchange between Marcovitch and his best friend, Ze'ev Feinberg. In most every way, the two men are opposites. But their friendship is true and long lasting, tested by dire circumstance. Thus, the question is legitimate: does their conversation represent more than a rebuke between friends?

"Going to bed with a nightdress and hoping you'll wake up with a woman in it? You must have fallen on your head. It'll never happen, not in a year, not in 20."

"So in another 30, or 40. You know what, Feinberg, maybe never. But I hope, and that's something too. And maybe if I hope enough, if I hope really hard, that hope will turn into something real. Look at us. Look at this country. Two thousand years we've been hoping for her, waiting for her, sleeping at night with our arms around the sleeves of her nightdress, because what is history if not the sleeves of a nightdress that has no smell? And you think she wants us? You think this country returns our love? Nonsense! She vomits us up time and time again, sends us to hell, beats us down without mercy. With the Romans and the Greeks and the Arabs and the mosquitoes. So you think that someone here says, 'If she doesn't want me, I should go?' Someone here says, 'There's no point in holding a country by force if she's been trying to get rid of you from the minute you came to her?' No. You hold on to her as hard as you can and you hope. You hope that maybe she'll finally look around and see you and say – that one. That's the one I want."

The answer to the above question, therefore, is: yes. Most definitely.

Gundar-Goshen is too sophisticated a writer, especially with the word "hope" – Israel's national anthem – reverberating in the air like a stuck metronome, to be so unsubtle about her intention for the grand theme of the story.

Readers will require patience. The writing is complex. The atmosphere is bleak. And the characters are challenging. ■

YIDDISH CORNER

דער ייִדישווינקל

פֿון דזשערי קיין

וען "דאָס חיסע הויז" – אַ טובֿערקולאָז סאַניטאָריע– איז געוואָרן אַ בינע פֿאַר שלום שטערנס לעבן און לידער אין קאַנאַדע

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פֿיר פֿון די גרעסטע פֿאָטן אין אונדזער ייִדישער ליטעראַטור דענען איבערגעקומען טובֿערקולאָז און געפֿונען, הינטער די ספּיטאָל חיעטן, אַן אינספּיראַציע צו שרייבן לידער וואָס קלינגען נאָך היינט. די פֿיר פֿאָטן דענען: ה. לייוויק, יוואס, שלום שטערן און מאַני לייב.

היינט שטייט שלום שטערן מיט אונדז אין וינקל; נישט ווייל איך האַלט אַז זיין שאַפֿונג איז מער דערוואַרטן, אָדער ווייל איך האָב אים פֿערזעלעך נעקענט. איך האַלט אים שטיַער ווייל ער איז נעחתן אַ ייִדישער פֿאָטע און אַ קאַנאַדער פֿאָטע; איינער פֿון די גרעסטע חעמפּנס לידער זיַנען אַנערקענט נעוואָרן אין די הערשנדיקע קולטורן– ענגליש און פֿראַנצויזיש– און האָבן זיך אינגאַנצן פֿאַרבונדן מיט ייִער ניי לאַנד.

די חאָפּ פֿאַרשן ליטעראַטור אין קאַנאַדע האַלטן אַז שטערן איז נעחתן א פֿאָטע וואָס האָט נעזען דאָס לאַנד און לעבן מיט א בריטערער פֿערספּעקטיוו. די מערסטע פֿון אונדזערע ייִדישע פֿאָטן האָבן קאַנסענטרירט בלויז אפֿן לעבן וואָס זיך נעפֿונען אַף דער ייִדישער נאָס.

אין "דאָס חיסע הויז" באַשרייבט שטערן נישט נאָר דאָס לעבן פֿון די קראַנקע הינטער די שפּיטאָל חינטן נאָר אויך דאָס לעבן פֿון קהעבעקער פֿויערים און די שיינקייט פֿון דער קהעבעקער נאַטור; די פֿעלדער, בערג און חאַסערן.

דאָס חיסע הויז, אַ יידישער שפּיטאָל, איז נעשטאַנען אין די לאָרענשן בערג לעבן סיינטאַגנאַט, 60 מייל פֿון מאָנטרעיאָל. שטערן שטעלט פֿאָר פֿאָר אונדז א מעשה נעשריבן אין פֿערזן. דער העלד איז איינער וועלוול גרינבלאַט וואָס האָט, אזוי ווי שטערן, געליטן פֿון "די חיסע קרענק" און נעחתן א פֿאציענט אין סאַניטאָריום.

די איינוווינער פֿון חיסן הויז זענען די זעלבע אימיגראַנטן וואָס האָבן פֿאַרלאָזט מיזרח אייראָפּע און נעבראַכט יידערע פֿאַרטיישע און רעליגיעזע חילוקים קיין קאַנאַדע. זיי זענען נעחתן קאָמוניסטן, ציוניסטן, פֿרומיאַקעס, שוויבער, און נעשעפּטס-ליַט. קראַנקייט האָט זיי נישט פֿאַרשטילט אין זיי זענען אַנגענאַנן מיט ווייַער ארגומענטן הינטער די שפּיטאָל חענט. שטערן חיַזט אז אפֿילו ווי שטאַרק רער פֿייַער פֿון רער קרענק האָט נעברענט האָט דאָס נישט פֿאַרשטילט פֿעסט נעהאַלטענע מיינונגען. פֿאַר אָט די ארגומענטן האָבן ווייַער שוואַכע לונגען נעפֿונען אָטעם.

הערט זיך צו ווי ייִציק טרוסטשאַנסקי, א פֿאַרברענטער קאָמוניסט, פֿאַר חעמען די קאָמוניסטישע צייַטונג, די "פֿרייהייט" איז נעחתן תורא, רעדט וחענן לענינס רעחאָלוציע אז:

"די פֿרייהייט" טוט קיינמאָל דעם אכח נישט פֿאַרהויליק. דערביבער א נייַעם כוס זי באַשאַפֿט כיַי פֿיל ארבעטער אין פּוילן וחלכע ליידענן זי נעדויים, אין די נעכט, ביַי קלייַנע לעפּלעך פֿון נאָפֿט. סיַי ווי די סאָוויעטער חעלן נעחתן. עס חעט נישט העלפֿן די ייִדישע שרייבער אין דער רעכטער פֿרעמע, וואָס ליַגנט חענן סאָוויעטפֿאַרבאַנד דק זיי שפּיגלן. נערעכט איז "די פֿרייהייט" אין איר אַנישידן: אז דער סאַציאַליזם חעט עפּעגען פֿון אַלע נרעעצן די טירן..."

אין אָט די הערטער וויַזט שטערן דעם צוברעכענעם שפּיגל פֿון זיַן לעבן. "דאָס חיסע הויז", נעשריבן פֿערציק יאָר נאָך שטערס קראַנקייט, איז א רעפּלעקציע פֿון א ציַט חען אַלע וויַנע גלויבונגען ועגען צושמעטערט נעחתאָרן. ער איז אַרפֿנאחאָקסן אין א פֿרומער היים חז משהם תורה האָט נעהערשט. ווי פֿיל אנדערע יונגע, האָבן אים פֿאַרפֿישופֿט די חערטער פֿון קאַרל מאַרקס. ער איז נעחתאָרן א קאָמוניסט און אחיים פֿון זיַן היים צו בריען א שענערע בעשערע חעלט. נישט משהם חערטער נאָך קאַרל מאַרקס חערטער זענען נעחתאָרן זיין וחענזיַנערס. אָבער נאָך היטלערס חורבן און סטאַלינס פֿאַרגאַם קענן יידיש האָט ער פֿאַרשטאַנען אז רער סאַציאַליזם חעט נישט "עפֿענען די טירן פֿון אַלע נרעעצן."

ל'סוף, אין א קאַרערע וואָס האָט זיך נעצערנן איבער ועכציק יאָר, האָט שלום שטערן אונדז איבערנעלאָזט א שאָפֿונג וואָס האָט נאָך היַנט א חערדע. זיַנע לידער זיַנען אַנערקענט אַלץ א טייל פֿון דער אַלגעמיינער קאַנאַדער ליטעראַטור און זענען איבערנעזונגען אף ענגליש און פֿראַנצויזיש. היַנט קלינגט די סטימע פֿון שלום שטערן פֿאַר ניַע לייענער וואָס האָבן קיינמאָל נישט נעקענט דאָס לעבן פֿון דער יידישער נאָס.

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Old Jews, and young ones, hold nothing back

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As it goes in the opening number in the off-Broadway hit, *Old Jews Telling Jokes*, the cast proves that "there are times when it's kosher for a Jew to be a ham."

The show, now playing at the Randolph Theatre, co-created by Peter Gethers, editor, publisher and president of Random House Films, and Daniel Okrent, a writer and editor, and best known for having served as the first public editor of the *New York Times*, will amuse anyone who can appreciate classic Jewish humour, and doesn't mind re-hearing an old, although re-worked, comedy gem.

The show was adapted from the Old Jews Telling Jokes website, which features videos of, well, people telling jokes. But on stage, theatre-goers can expect more than a stand-up routine.

The cast, featuring Allan Price as Morty, Theresa Tova as Bunny, Jess Abramovitch as Debbi, David Gale as Nathan and Alan Kliffer as Reuben, acted out their roles as if they were caricatures of old world Jews – to the point where Jackie Mason might even think it was a little much.

Some of the cast from *Old Jews Telling Jokes*

Kliffer, a Winnipeg native who graduated from the Randolph Academy and The Second City Conservatory, one of the two young Jews telling jokes, stole the show, often garnering big laughs from the audience with his over-the-top delivery and facial contortions.

As for the material itself, there was a mix of short, expletive filled jokes (Daddy, where do babies come from? A stork. Who f---s the stork?), jokes with long-winded setups acted out by the five-person cast, as well as musical numbers.

The 90-minute show is also broken up into themes, such as marriage, retirement, business and money. Woven throughout the show were monologues that touched on the important role humour plays within Jewish identity, how it helps bring people together, and in some cases, cope with difficult moments in life.

In Bunny's story, Tova, who once starred as Yenta in *Fiddler on the Roof* at the Stratford Festival, tells a story about a woman who grew up not wanting to be funny. Ironically, it is her sense of humour that gets her fired from her job at an ad agency. But it was also her wit that compelled a co-worker to start a new agency with her – one that ended up successful enough to buy out the agency from which she was fired.

In Reuben's story, he recalls getting a phone call while out on a date with his girlfriend. It was a call from his father, who was informing his son that he was dying of cancer.

"A year later, he was lying on his death bed. I asked him if he was comfortable. He shrugged his shoulders and said, 'I make a living.'"

Although the show is very much about the jokes, the crass one-liners [My boyfriend got the words, "I love you" tattooed on his penis. I told him to stop putting words in my mouth], and a likable cast that holds nothing back, the show also has some heart, reminding the audience that in good times and bad, a Jewish sense of humour is often what binds a people together. ■

Old Jews Telling Jokes *runs until Dec. 6 at the Randolph Theatre,736 Bathurst St., Toronto. Tickets cost between $45 and $65. Call the box office for tickets at 1-844-448-7469. playhouseinfo.com*

TORONTO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL
CHAI TEA & A MOVIE SERIES

ONCE IN A LIFETIME / LES HÉRITIERS

France 2014, 105 min
French with English subtitles

Event Date: Sunday, October 25

Two Screening Times: 1:00pm & 4:00pm

Location: Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. (North York Centre subway station)

Director: Marie-Castille Mention-Schaar

Tickets: $15 Available at TJFF.COM or 416-324-9121
(Cash only at door, subject to availability)

Coffee and tea will be available in-theatre immediately prior to screening.

The Multi-Award-Winning Film is Back By Popular Demand! A powerful drama based on a true story. The lives of a group of troubled inner city students are changed forever when their history teacher enters them in a high school competition on the theme of what it meant to be a teen in a Nazi concentration camp. She is determined to engage them in a project that will instil a sense of purpose and ambition. Though the project is first met with resistance, the students begin to open up to each other as they delve into the subject and ultimately learn to believe in themselves and their ability. "A hit at the Cannes Film Festival, Marie-Castille Mention-Schaar's drama offers new insight on the impact that Holocaust education can have on future generations" (UK Jewish Film Festival). **The Micki Moore Prize Winner at the 2015 Toronto Jewish Film Festival.**

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Movie about Nazi war criminals opens this week

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Benjamin August moved to Los Angeles a decade ago to try his hand at writing movies, he began to work on what he thought would sell. Years later, his first story to get its screen debut is a psychological thriller about a 90-year-old Holocaust survivor with an unreliable memory.

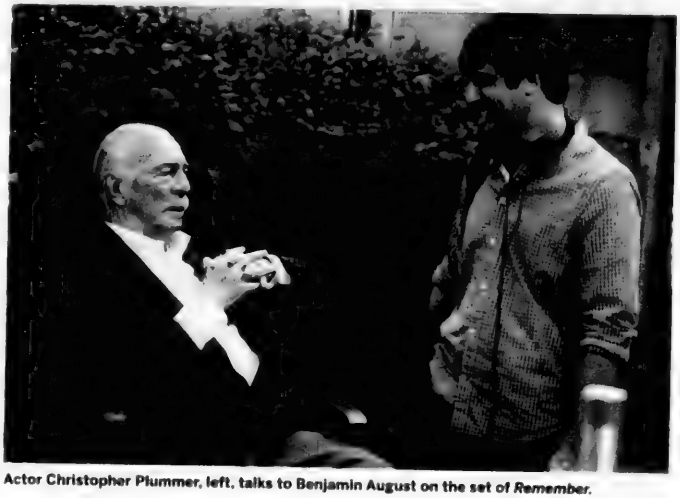
Of course, not the easiest story to sell to a film producer.

"When I had the idea for *Remember*, [my manager] said, 'this is a super hard one to sell because no one likes movies with old people, but it's an awesome idea, and good ideas find homes.'"

That home ended up being with Canadian producer Robert Lantos, who had never before decided to produce a screenplay with a story he hadn't developed.

Remember premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in September and is set to open in theatres across Canada on Oct. 23.

In the thriller, directed by Atom Egoyan (*The Sweet Hereafter*), Christopher Plummer plays Zev, an aging Holocaust survivor. After his wife dies, Zev decides that he has little to lose and begins to search for the Nazi guard responsible for his family's murder at Auschwitz, whom he believes is still alive.



Actor Christopher Plummer, left, talks to Benjamin August on the set of *Remember*.

Despite the ubiquity of news stories about war criminals coming out of hiding and receiving prosecution, August says that wasn't an inspiration for this story.

"It started more with wanting to write a movie starring an older man," says August, 36. "I just felt like there are so many great older actors, like Christopher Plummer, who don't get lead roles anymore."

While *Remember* has similarities to Christopher Nolan's *Memento*, August adds that *The Straight Story*, a low-key American drama that earned actor Richard Farnsworth an Oscar nomination at age 79, was also an influence.

"There's something about older people that we trust," he says. "It makes us a little more sympathetic to them in their journey, so we're rooting for them."

The subject matter was also inspired from August's time living in Vietnam. He moved there from Los Angeles during the writers' strike in 2007 to teach English as a second language.

Nevertheless, the topic of war criminals evading punishment resonated with the scribe during his time there, from guilt of what some American soldiers did to the Vietnamese during that protracted war.

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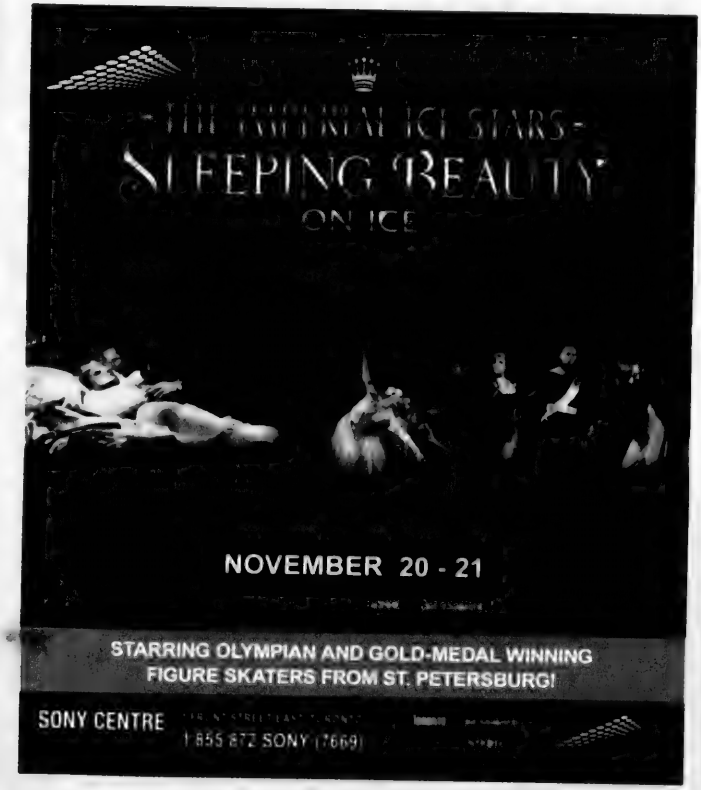

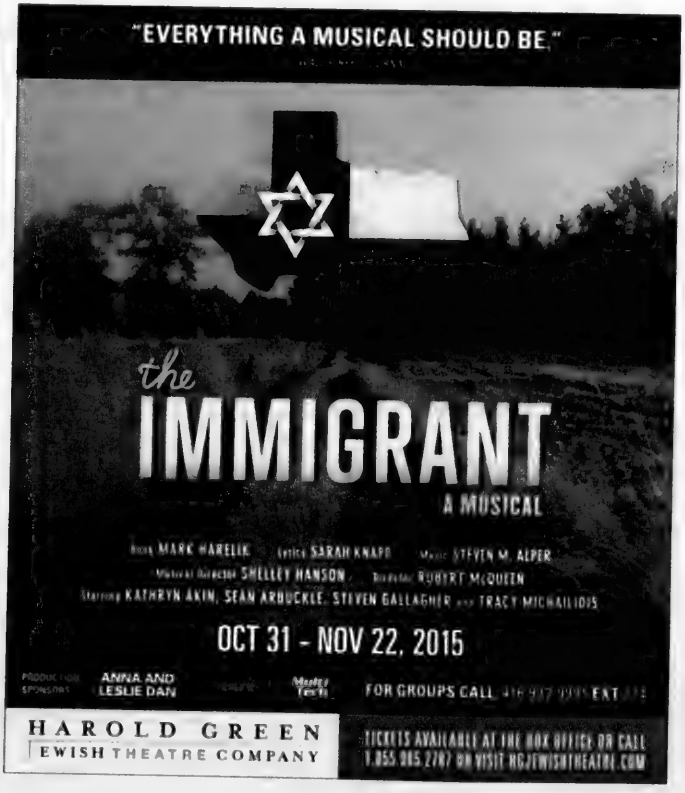

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Writer refined script for years

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"These people got to live a full life," he says of war criminals. "That thought is something that really inspired me to write. Have they changed? Do they reflect on what they did? Or are they cowering every day in fear of being recognized and being caught?"

August, a Jewish native of New Jersey, didn't lose any direct family in the Shoah, although he says he vividly remembers the tattoos on the arms of his Hebrew school teachers.

The first draft of *Remember* only took August one month to write, but it wasn't until a couple years of rewrites before the screenplay ended up in Lantos' hands.

"I knew since it was such a hard script to get made, it had to be in really tiptop shape," he says.

While he worked on various scripts during his time in Los Angeles, including a few comedies, the only major screen credit August received at the time was as a producer on the reality show *Fear Factor*.

Looking back at the hokey comedy scripts he worked on as he tried to break into the industry, August says they are embarrassing to look at.

With two other thrillers lined up for production – including one for Black Bear Pictures, the studio behind *The Imitation Game* – August has a good plan to remain engaged in what he writes.

"The goal... is to make people ask questions after [the film]," he says. "I think an audience is going to walk out [of *Remember*] and say, 'What would you do? Did you see that twist coming?'"

"If you're not asking questions, then we did something wrong." ■

Book tries to unlock a family mystery

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Myrna Neuringer Levy

To many people, the image of the shtetl is linked to Sholem Aleichem's fictional story *Fiddler on the Roof*.

In *Shattered Stones, Scattered Seeds: The Story of the Shtetl and a Family Who Lived There*, author Myrna Neuringer Levy, presents a view of history through her family which covers two centuries of Jewish life in the shtetl.

In her memoir, Levy attempts to unfold a family mystery through the backdrop of the 19th and 20th centuries in eastern Europe and the mass immigration to America.

Curious about a photograph of her grandmother Clara Neuringer, who never left the Galician shtetl of Borchov (Borszczow) when her husband and sons left for New York, Levy researches several sources to try to solve the mystery.

These sources include, the Yizkor book on Borszczow written in Yiddish and translated by Miriam Beckerman in 1960, letters written by her grandmother to her husband in New York, a family history her grandfather wrote of the extended family and a photo album of numerous pictures her father took when he went to Poland to visit his mother Clara in 1933.

Although the mystery of why Clara did not leave with her family is not solved, the book describes the events that created this mystery while projecting a vivid picture of the living conditions in the shtetl and historical events, including the world wars and the Holocaust.

Levy presents a vivid picture of everyday life, dowries, education, anti-Semitism and the hardships the Jews faced and how it affected family relationships.

Levy has included maps and numerous photographs.

Her grandmother's letters, saved by her grandfather and found after his death, leave confusion as to the breakup of the family despite the rise of Nazism. Levy questions why her grandmother didn't leave at that time.

The Jewish residents of Borchov and the nearby towns were placed in a ghetto and were massacred in attacks between 1942 and 1943.

"I was about six years old at the time, not an age when you ask pertinent, relevant questions that needed to be asked, should have been asked," she said. "The world was at war. How did a letter get out of a place occupied by the enemy? How long did it take for the letter to arrive at our apartment in Brooklyn, N.Y.?"

Levy told *The CJN* that she has had an unexpected reaction to her book from people who are not members of her family.

"For many Jewish and non-Jewish people, it has brought out stories of their own families. For others, they say that it gave them an insight on shtetl life and the immigrant experience."

All of Levy's material is now with YIVO in New York. The Yizkor book translation is available online at JewishGen.org.

Levy, a former elementary special education teacher and librarian, has published three books for children. She was born and educated in New York City and moved to Toronto after her marriage to Ed Levy. ■

Shattered Stones, Scattered Seeds is available at Israel's, Aleph Bet, and it can be ordered on eBooks from Chapters, Barnes and Noble, Amazon or visit www.myrnasbooks.com.

Producer tackles tense topics for TV and movies

A scene from *The Wanted 18*. Inset is Ina Fichman. HEATHER SOLOMON PHOTO

HEATHER SOLOMON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, MONTREAL

Ina Fichman of Intuitive Pictures is at a happy place in her career as a producer.

The Wanted 18 that premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) last year, won the top documentary prize this summer at the Traverse City Film Festival in Northern Michigan headed by Michael Moore. She has hopes it will go on to compete for an Oscar.

The 75-minute film, co-directed by Montrealer Paul Cowan and Palestinian Amer Shomali, is set in the Middle East during the first intifadah in the 1980s.

It's about a community of pacifist intellectual Palestinian professionals in Beit Sahour outside Bethlehem who decide to create their own dairy farm, a step in controlling their lives and providing for their own needs.

The story, based on a real-life incident, is told not only from the point of view of these men and women but also using the *Animal Farm*-like voices of a small herd of Israeli cows, portrayed in stop-motion animation.

The cows, purchased from a sympathetic kibbutznik, "find themselves in the middle of a mess" when Israel deems them a threat and seeks to have them removed.

One cow is depicted as a staunch Zionist, another becomes a Palestinian sympathizer and a third "goes through a metamorphosis in terms of how she feels about being part of what's going on there." The bovines lend absurdity and humour to the sensitive subject.

Animation was done in Montreal by a team of 10 Concordia University film graduates "working out of an old shmatte building on Chabanel that we converted into an animation studio with shooting stations," says the producer.

Now Fichman is expanding the film's creative footprint to include an interactive graphic novel that involves readers using their tablets to navigate through the village, choose chapters, play games and access bonus content like recipes and the story of Israel.

"It's entertaining but at the same time, it has content. We're offering it as a free app," says Fichman.

Another of her projects, *100 Percent T-Shirt* about the history of the T-shirt, has gone interactive, with the company website "asking people to share their T-shirt stories and photos.

"People hold onto their T-shirts for years because of memories. I still have my Camp Ramah T-shirt," says Fichman.

"Over the next year we're going to be choosing four causes and asking designers to create a shirt that reflects the cause. They'll be printed and the money will go to the cause.

"The first, on the theme of girl power, is connected to a film I produced last year called *Monsoon* [that won the Audience Choice award of TIFF's Top Ten]. In it, a young woman in Kerala in the south of India wants to become a nurse so we set up an education fund for her."

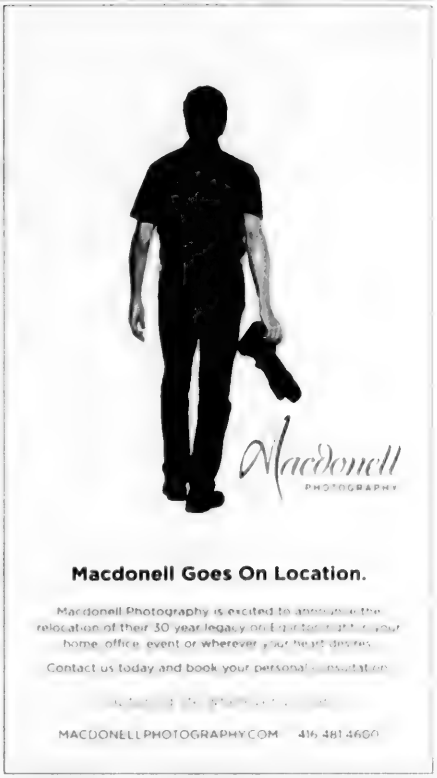
An illustrious woman is the subject of Fichman's most recent film, *Vita Activa: A spiritual biography of Hannah Arendt*, a Canada-Israel co-production directed by Ada Ushpiz and featuring Alison Darcy (Maurice Podbrey's daughter) as Arendt's voice and archival footage.

"It's a look at Hannah Arendt's philosophy on the banality of evil and the plight of the refugee, its connection to her life and what it means today," she says.

"We just signed with U.S. distributor Zeitgeist and it will be released in the States early in 2016. We're doing a shorter version for Radio-Canada to be televised next year."

Fichman is just starting production on a sequel to Abbey Neidik's *Shekina* that follows a group of chassidic girls into womanhood, with some leaving their communities. After more than 25 years working out of Montreal, with local as well as global partners, Fichman is here to stay. ■

For information on the availability of films or the graphic novel, and participation in the T-shirt contest, go to www.intuitivepictures.ca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Athletes represent Canada around the world

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

He was also unlucky in doubles, losing to the top British team in the first round.

No stranger to honours, Dembe was the Canadian Paraplegic Association Male Athlete of the year in 2011. He was also awarded the 2012 Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal.

In 2014, he was part of a cross-country tour of Canada Cares. This is a non-profit organization that creates a sense of community for family and professional caregivers by increasing awareness and providing encouragement.

He recently joined RBC as part of the RBC Olympians Program. There, he'll be involved in marketing and sponsorship across the Greater Toronto Area. He'll also be involved with coaching as part of Tennis Canada's new junior wheelchair tennis team. He has announced his retirement from competitive tennis.

"My goals are now career-based. I hope to grow the sport of wheelchair tennis, and help develop future stars of our sport here in Canada. I've just become a Tennis Canada-certified instructor and will also be obtaining my next level of coaching this winter," Dembe says.

He has primarily been delivering speeches in schools over the past few years. Now he's focusing on the corporate world. "I hope to motivate anyone on the importance of overcoming obstacles, physical activity and hard work."

At this point, he's not sure if he will participate in the next Paralympics. "I'm still relatively young for a complete retirement," he says, "so I can't give a definite answer about this quite yet." His focus now remains on his post-athletic career.

For Levine, this year has been packed with setting goals and achieving them. She says she keeps on setting more challenging goals as her career progresses. She qualified for the Paralympics in doubles in May, so she now focuses on qualifying for individuals. She will also attend the world championships in China this year. She is currently doing a GoFundMe campaign to raise money for a new wheelchair.

If not for her disability, Levine says, she would probably never have had the opportunity to represent her country or get to spend her days playing a sport she loves. ■

Alison Levine won a silver medal in mixed pairs in boccia at the Parapan Am Games.

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To be eligible to win click on "Contests" at www.cjnews.com and email us your name, address and daytime phone number or mail/fax us the information. All entries received by 3 p.m. on Monday, October 26th are eligible. The winning entries will be randomly selected at The CJN offices on Tuesday, October 27th. The winners will be notified the same day. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. One entry per person.
The CJN will not enter into any correspondence with contestants.
Email your information to "contest@thecjn.ca" Re: "OLDJEWS" Contest, or mail to:
The Canadian Jewish News 1750 Steeles Ave. W. Suite 218, Concord, Ontario, L4K 2L7 or fax to: 416-391-0949
Employees and family members of The CJN, Canadian Primedia, Dynamic Edge Solutions are not eligible to enter

The Socialite

Standing: Karen Orobkin, Nicole Posner, Moishe Posner, Kenny Wise, Sherri Wise, Sue Zeifman; sitting: Rabbi Daniel Korobkin, Jason Kenney, Peter Kent, Laurence Zeifman

Allan Weinbaum, Marilyn and Mendy Maierovitz, Florence and Frank Dimant

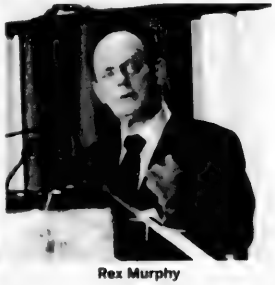
Luke Shuster, Nigel Shuster, Carol Weinbaum, Allan Weinbaum

Jason Kenney

Mizrachi Gala

Frank and Florence Dimant, and Mendy and Marilyn Maierovitz were honoured recently at the Mizrachi Gala, at which the Jack Weinbaum Memorial Scholarship Fund for Study in Israel was established. For over 60 years, Mizrachi Toronto has been involved in raising funds for a wide range of Israeli Torah institutions as well as fundraising for special projects. Minister of Defence and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney provided opening remarks while CBC's Rex Murphy was a stimulating guest speaker. ■ – *The Socialite*

Israeli Consul General DJ Schneeweiss



Rex Murphy

Sherri and Hananel Segal, Bonny Silver and Jeffery Silver

Jack Feintuch, Laurence Zeifman, Jack Samuel, event chairmen

George and Florence Weinberger, Marilyn and Mendy Maierovitz

Susan Kahn, Jason Kenney and Jack Kahn

HUDSON TAYLOR PHOTOS

The Socialite wants your photos. Email thesocialite@thecjn.ca for submission details.

What's New

OCT. 22 - OCT. 29

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Oct. 22

CHALLAH BAKE
Beth David Synagogue holds a community challah bake, 7 p.m.

HOW JEWS CHANGED THE WORLD
Larry Rachlin discusses "Jews who changed how we look at everything," 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS
Rabbi Wayne Allen discusses the Book of Psalms, tonight and Oct. 29, 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

BOOK LAUNCH
Rabbi Avraham Feder discusses "Pillars of fog and fire: being a Jew in a dangerous world," at his book launch, 7:30 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

Friday, Oct. 23

HARTMAN INSTITUTE
Rabbi Donniel Hartman speaks at Beth Tzedec Congregation. Tonight, "The New face of 21st-century Jewry," 416-781-3511 to reserve for dinner; Oct. 24, pulpit address, "Together or apart: Israel and the Jewish world."

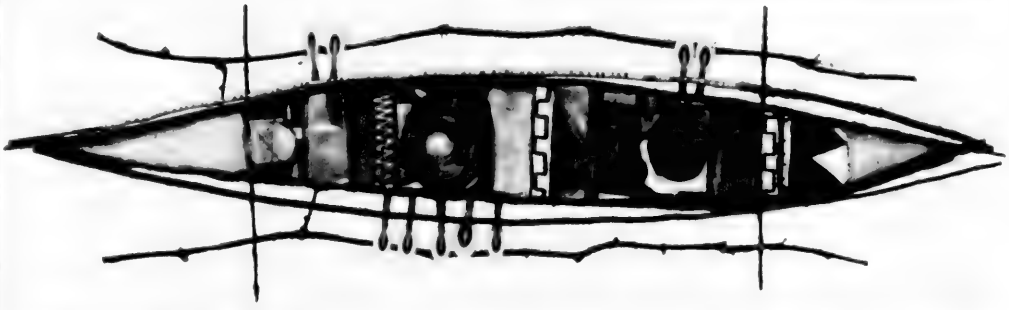
POTLUCK SHABBAT PROJECT
Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds a musical oneg Shabbat and potluck dinner, 7:30 p.m., 4700 Bathurst St. $20. RSVP 416-385-3910.

Sunday, Oct. 25

THE KEY TO LIFE'S BLESSINGS
Rabbi Lazer Brody and **Dr. Zev Ballen** discuss "Gratitude: the master key to life's blessings," 8 p.m., Sephardic Kehila Centre. 416-827-7666.

THEATRE TALKS
Robert McQueen discusses the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company's production of *The Immigrant – A Musical*, Temple Sinai, 10:15 a.m.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Nov. 5 is Oct. 26. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**



Passage Harbour, by artist Alice Vander Vennen, is part of an exhibit titled *Passages*. The artworks, three-dimensional assemblages of copper, stone and textile, are on display at the Miles Nadal JCC until Oct. 28.

VENDOR MARKET
Temple Har Zion holds a vendor marketplace, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

HEBREW CLASSES
Beth Emeth Synagogue offers free Hebrew reading classes for beginners, 9:15 a.m. 416-633-3838 to register.

BERNARD BETEL OPEN HOUSE
Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., holds an open house, celebrating its 50th anniversary, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Food, entertainment, art show and more.

CABARET FOR CARING
Cabaret for Caring features singer **Aelita** at a fundraiser for women under 40 with breast cancer in Toronto and Israel. Sponsored by Na'amat Canada, 7 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. $54/$72. 416-636-5425.

BOOK LAUNCH
Anne Dublin launches her new book *44 Hours or Strike!* 2:30 p.m., Steelmakers Union Hall, 25 Cecil St.

MEDICAL HALACHAH
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "Judaism and obsessive-compulsive disorder," 8:45 a.m., Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation. 647-234-7299.

CANADIAN CLUB OF DEERFIELD
Canadian Club of Deerfield Beach holds a meet and greet 2-5 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. www.canadianclubcve.com

BE THE MATCH
Adath Israel Congregation holds a stem cell and bone marrow donor clinic, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

SINGLES IN THE PARK
Singles in the Park (single, divorced and widowed Jewish men and women over 50), hosts a ghost walk through the University of Toronto, 4 p.m. (meet on the east side of the Royal Ontario Museum). $10. RSVP debbygo@yahoo.com or 416-631-0005.

Monday, Oct. 26

SIGNS OF ADDICTION
Ori Goldstein and **David Kaufman** discuss "Do you know someone struggling with addiction?" 7:30 p.m. $15/$20, Adath Israel Congregation.

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Dr. Geoff Fernie discusses "The many ways technology will help us age gracefully," 2 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $45/series; $15/ lecture. 416-449-3880.

TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD
A panel of speakers discusses "Transition to adulthood: how to encourage independence without losing peace of mind," 7:30 p.m., DANI Centre, 501 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill.$5.

ART SERIES
Temma Gentles discusses "Art illuminates Judaism and Judaism illuminates art," today, Nov. 2, 9 at Temple Sinai, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 27

ASSOCIATED OPEN HOUSE
Associated Hebrew Schools holds an open house at Kamin Education Centre, 300 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill, 7:30 p.m. RSVP mkomlos@ahschools.com

LUNCHING AND LEARNING
Dan Yashinsky discusses "Storytelling in family and health-care settings," Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.
Doug Purdon discusses "Art forgery and crime," Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, program starts at 12:30 p.m.

JOYS OF JEWISH MUSIC
Ailza Spiro presents "Jewish musical comedy," 1:30 p.m. Beth Tzedec Congregation. Free. RSVP 416-781-3511.

CHUG HATANACH
Rabbi Moshe Meirovich discusses the Book of Isaiah, 8 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

TALMUD/HEBREW CLASSES
Rabbi Avraham Plotkin teaches Talmud for women, starting today;

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

beginners Hebrew class starts Oct. 29; Chabad of Markham, 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

THREADS OF HOPE
Mark Rosenblum discusses "Threads of hope for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," 7:30 p.m., Carr Hall, University of Toronto, 100 St. Joseph St., Sponsored by Canadian Friends of Peace Now.

CONCERT AND ART EXHIBIT
Beth Torah Congregation presents a concert to celebrate the opening of the **Samuel Bak** exhibit for Holocaust Education Week, 7 p.m.

TAKING ROOT
Shoresh celebrates and discusses plans for Bela Farm, 6-9 p.m., Artscape Sandbox, 31 Widmer St. For tickets, www.eventbrite.ca

Wednesday, Oct. 28

BIBLICAL DAY TRIPS
Hana Werner discusses "Concubine: shame and horror when the world was lawless," 1:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. $10. RSVP 416-781-3511.

THE JEWS OF CHINA
Margo Gewurtz discusses "The Jews of China," in 6 sessions starting tonight, 7:30 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Free for members, $15/session for non-members.

Thursday, Oct. 29

BOOK CLUB
Sherry Gluck discusses *All the Light We Cannot See*. Temple Har Zion, 8 p.m.

GALA CONCERT
Aaron Bensoussan and friends perform for Beth Emeth Synagogue's 60th anniversary, 7:30 p.m. $36. 416-633-3838.

FRUMBA
Pride of Israel Synagogue offers women's cardio dance fitness classes, noon. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Volunteers needed to distribute poppies Oct. 30-Nov. 11 in the Bathurst Street and St. Clair Avenue area for the Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch. Email sgs823@sympatico.ca

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- **Mind body connection for women:** An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Oct. 26 at 1 p.m. or Oct. 29 at 7 p.m. at Lipa Green Centre; or Oct. 28 at 7 p.m. at Lebovic Campus or 35 Madison Ave.
- **Parenting the child/teen with ADHD:** A 4-week group for parents of children diagnosed with ADHD. Oct. 29, 7 p.m.
- **Separation 101:** A 1-session workshop for adults in the process of separating from their spouse. Oct. 29, 7 p.m.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Oct. 22, **Beverly Fingerhut** discusses "The great synagogues of Paris, Florence and Rome," 1:30 p.m.; Oct. 29, **Renate Krakauer** discusses her new novel, *Only by Blood*, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or email lisar@mnjcc.org.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9; Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.; exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Oct. 25 open house celebrating 50 years, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Oct. 27, **Gerald Ziedenberg** discusses "A history of modern Russia – part 2," 10 a.m.; Oct. 28, lecture on chronic pain, 1:30 p.m.; Oct.29, lecture on vaccines, 1:30 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Bingo, Oct. 26, 1:30 p.m.; Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; live entertainment Nov. 18, 2 p.m.
- **Beth Emeth Synagogue.** Free mah-jong class starts Nov. 2, 10 a.m. 416-633-3838.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- Yiddish conversation, Mondays at 1:30 p.m.
- Screening of *24 Days*, Nov. 22, 7 p.m.
- "A Taste of Jazz," presented by the Royal Conservatory of Music, Nov. 3-17, 1 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Van Gogh and Gauguin, Friendship, rivalry and tragedy," Nov. 17- Dec.1, 1 p.m.
- Lecture on "The Dead Sea Scrolls: a window into early Judaism," Nov. 5, 1 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "A look at Jewish comedy in movies," Nov. 4-25, 1 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

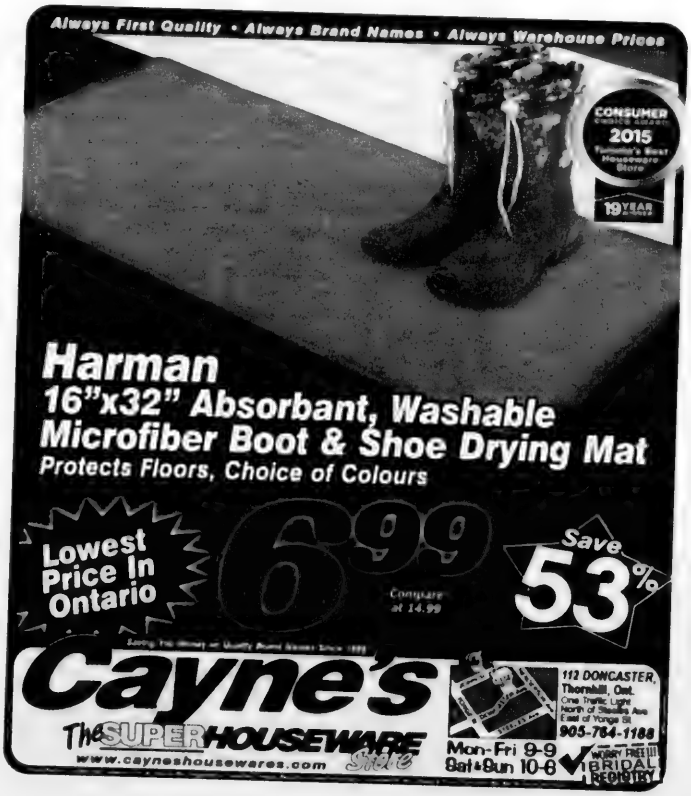
750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- The gallery is looking for an Israeli visual artist for March 2016. Submissions close Nov. 1. Email deannad@mnjcc.org
- Fall supper club for young adults with developmental disabilities, Wednesdays till Nov. 18, 4 -8:30 p.m. Ext. 330
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities. Ongoing to Dec. 6, 1 p.m. Ext. 330.
- Shabbat family party, spaces still available, Fridays, 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Ext. 388.
- Fitness: Inclusive run club, starts Oct. 22 at 6 p.m. or Nov. 7 at noon.
- Israeli connection: programs for Israeli children and families. Hebrew language stories and puppet shows for kids age 3-6, starts Oct. 25, 4:30 p.m.; Family Shabbat dinner, Oct. 25, 6 p.m. Ext. 321.
- Wheel dance: learn Latin dance in a mixed abilities class. Sundays to Dec. 6, 6 p.m. Ext. 330.
- From tummies to mummies: postnatal spin class, Mondays 10:30 a.m. Ext. 567.
- Open community choir, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. with **Gillian Stecyk**.
- Social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Ext. 330.
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the art of Degas, Oct. 26, 1:30 p.m.
- *Defending the Caveman*, a comedy about the sexes, weekends till Oct. 31, Al Green Theatre, 8 p.m. www.thecaveman.ca.
- **Iain Scott** discusses "Four of the greatest scenes from opera," Mondays starting Nov. 2, 1:30 p.m.
- Kat-Ka Team, activities for students in grades 2-8, meets Oct. 25, 1:30 p.m. With Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror. RSVP shaliach.gesher@gmail.com
- Support group for adult children of Holocaust survivors starts Oct. 29. Call **Shoshana Yaakobi** 416-785-2500, ext. 2271
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m., Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein.** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

- "Is your child a picky eater?" will be discussed Nov. 11, 7 p.m
- Asian cooking workshop, Nov. 3, 1 p.m.
- Create a silk cover, Nov. 5- 26, 7 p.m.
- Screening of *Above and Beyond*, Nov. 8, 7 p.m. ■



WRY BREAD

Just Jewish enough

David Levine

After seven long years in Los Angeles, Aaron Miller was about to give up. The Canadian-born actor was growing tired of being passed over, season after season, for leading roles.

Miller, 32, is a rising star whose talent and charisma have shone since he first caught the acting bug at age 12. His acclaimed performances on stage and screen led to his decision to move south, where he was included on countless lists of the "next big things" to expect from Hollywood.

But the roles never came.

"It would always go the same way," remembers Miller. "Casting directors love me, they want to work with me, and I'd never hear from them again. I could never understand it."

As the rejections – and the bills - started mounting, Miller decided to find out, once and for all, what was going on. Was this just bad luck? Had he said the wrong thing to the wrong person? Had someone started a troublesome rumour about him?

"I started asking anyone I met, 'What's going on? What have you heard?' And I started to hear this one answer again and again."

The answer is an old, dirty Hollywood secret: Aaron Miller didn't look Jewish enough.

"That really came as a surprise to me," says Miller. "Back in Montreal, everyone could tell I was a Jew. They'd shout it at me from across the street! But this is Hollywood, and things can be a little superficial when you're up for an SSP."

An SSP, or "supportive semitic partner," role (also known as Rudd Roles), is the holy grail of parts for young Jewish actors like Miller, allowing them to flex their self-deprecating comic chops in leading romantic comedy roles.

"An SSP may not always get the girl, but he'll always get a punchline," says Miller, calling it "the role I was born to play."

But the SSP needs to strike a delicate balance – the popular adage demands that the SSP be "likeable, but not cool; attractive, but not threatening and clever, but not smooth," he says. And even though he has the phrase tattooed on his forearm, Miller's perfectly proportioned facial features were holding him back.

The last straw for Miller came in 2012, when he lined up auditions for eight SSP roles, but was ultimately passed over for all of them in favour of Jason Segel, Paul Rudd, Seth Rogen, Andy Samberg, Adam Scott, Zach Braff, Josh Radnor and Bill Hader, respectively.

That's when Miller made the decision that would forever alter the trajectory of his career – he opted to undergo a surgical procedure designed to optimize his facial features for "ethnic-cinematic equilibrium" in screen tests.

The surgery is not without controversy – critics in the press and social media have attacked Miller's decision to "go native" – but he defends his decision.

"I had a lot to offer," he explains, "but I can't offer anything if no one's looking at me."

Miller doesn't regret his decision, but he advises caution to aspiring actors who might choose to follow in his footsteps:

"Looking a certain way is only the beginning. I see a lot of guys in auditions – they saved up to get their noses enlarged, and then they head straight for Hollywood. But no one's buying it."

For Miller, the surgery meant increasing the visibility of his semitic features by approximately 32 per cent.

"Do I wish it hadn't been necessary? Of course. But it's a demanding industry. I've got nothing to hide."

And the industry is certainly looking now, with Miller's star on the rise since his return to the scene. Significant Oscar buzz swirls about his post-surgical portrayals of Dan Green, the insecure watchmaker looking for love in a digital age in *Time and Again*, and Ben Stone, a widower and single dad who accidentally starts dating both of his daughters' teachers at once in *Two Apples*.

Through it all, Miller remains humbly dedicated to honing his craft. "There are no shortcuts to success," he maintains. "Only surgical ones." ■

Follow A. David Levine on twitter at @adavidlevine

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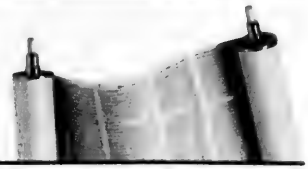
Parshah

Lech Lecha | Genesis 12:1-17:27



Rabbi Aaron Katchen reflects on the balance between individuality and community
Rabbi Michal Shekel offers a lesson on how to deal with people, possessions and priorities
Rabbi Howard Morrison explores the unique relationships each of the patriarchs built with God

Aaron Katchen

"God took him outside and said, 'Look at the sky, and count the stars if you can! So will be your descendants'" (Gen. 15:5), "and as the sand on the seashore" (Gen. 22:17).

I have long considered myself a follower of the teachings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (Rav Kook), the first chief rabbi of pre-state Israel. Until recently, I have mostly relied on my teachers and others to access his words. For the past year, I have struggled through learning and teaching the Torah of Rav Kook myself, and I would like to share an idea he raises in Midbar Shur, relating to the blessings Abraham receives from God in Lech Lecha.

God uses various analogies to express the magnitude of the descendants of Abraham. One is like the stars above and another is like the sand on the seashore. Each star is enormous. It has its own purpose as well its own name (or opportunity to be named). Whereas sand, although there are formulas to quantify the world's sand, each individual grain is irrelevant, except when it finds its way into our eye or drink.

For Rav Kook, these metaphors are meant to represent both an individual Jew and the Jewish People. Any given star represents an individual Jew. It is a universe unto itself and has infinite value. As the Talmud teaches, whoever saves a life, it is as if they have saved an entire world. The opposite is true as well.

The sand represents the Jewish People and our collective goals. In that context, individual grains become inconsequential. Collectively, though, beaches are formed, and dry land becomes a buffer from the sea.

By creating the balance between our individual worth and the necessity of community, we understand the power of God's blessing and promise to Abraham about the potential of us – his descendants. ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen, who is based in Toronto, directs Ask Big Questions Canada in partnership with Hillel.

Michal Shekel

"O Lord God, what can You give me, seeing that I shall die childless" (Genesis 15:2). This is a powerful, provocative question from Abram in reaction to God's promise of protection and great reward.

Lech Lecha is an incredible journey filled with blessing. When Abram leaves his home in Haran for Canaan, he is a wealthy man. When there is a famine in Canaan, he heads to Egypt, where his encounter with Pharaoh results in increased wealth. Upon his arrival in the Negev, we are informed: "Now Abram was very rich in cattle, silver, and gold. " (Genesis 13:2). At Hebron, God promises him land.

Yet possessions are not Abram's priority, people are. We are told that Abram journeys from Haran with an entourage. This group is traditionally understood to consist of individuals who came to believe in God because of Abram and Sarai. We see Abram's priority carried out when he frees a kidnapped Lot and rescues other people in the process. He turns down a reward offered him by the king of Sodom, though, admittedly, he accepts reimbursement for provisions.

Lech Lecha offers a lesson in dealing with possessions, people and priorities. For Abram, material wealth is worthless when measured against the value of people.

The importance of Abram's query is demonstrated by another individual less fortunate than Abram: Hagar. In the same parshah, Hagar runs away due to the harsh treatment she endures under Sarai. She is convinced to submit to it because her reward, like Abram's, will be a son who will be a great nation. For Hagar, suffering is endurable if done for the sake of progeny.

Whether one is Abram, Hagar, you or I, it is not your station in life, but the people in your life that imbue it with meaning. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is the executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis and spiritual leader of Har Tikvah Congregation in Brampton, Ont.

Howard Morrison

Parshat Lech Lecha introduces us to the beginning of the Jewish People. We learn about the spiritual journey started by Abraham and Sarah. It will continue with the second generation pioneered by Isaac and Rebecca. Their experience will be perpetuated by the third generation of Jacob, Rachel, and Leah. Every daily Amidah begins with a paragraph known as Avot, the Patriarchs. Nowadays, many Jews in the more liberal movements add the names of the matriarchs. All Jews, mention the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The beginning of the Amidah focuses on Zechut Avot, the merit of our ancestors. We don't petition God for anything. Rather, we praise God and make reference to the first three generations of our history.

The text does not simply state "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Rather, the text states, "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Why is God's name mentioned three times? Didn't the founders of our faith all believe in the same God? While monotheism is a fundamental Jewish contribution to the world, the repetition of God's name before each of patriarch's name suggests that each understood God in his own way. The talmudic lesson that Abraham instituted morning prayer, Isaac instituted afternoon prayer, and Jacob instituted evening prayer may be associated with the idea that each patriarch developed his own personal relationship with God.

We have completed an intense month of holidays on the Jewish calendar. Many of us have grappled with complex ideas in the siddur and machzor over the past weeks. May we all find a place in the daily liturgy of our tradition. The core prayer of every service is the Amidah, also known as Ha'Tfillah – The prayer." Seven days a week, at least three times a day, the opening begins with the notion that each of our founders found his special relationship with God. May we follow in the footsteps of our patriarchs and matriarchs and find our special place with God as well. ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior clergy at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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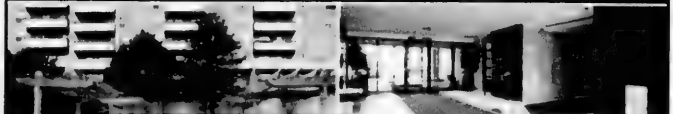

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Old and new converge at bistro

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Queen Street West between University and Spadina avenues was an ultra-hip enclave of art galleries, specialty book stores and indie-designer clothing shops during the '70s and '80s, but the area has become more mainstream in recent years.

Many independent retailers have been replaced by chain stores like Gap, American Eagle and Zara's. Despite these changes, this Queen Street strip is still home to many of the iconic bars and restaurants that have been drawing people to the area for decades.

One of the oldest of these culinary institutions is the venerable Peter Pan Bistro at 373 Queen St. W. The restaurant, at the south-east corner of Peter and Queen streets has been a neighbourhood landmark for almost 40 years.

Last year, the ownership changed and chef/owner Noah Goldberg, 32, took over. He reopened the newly renovated eatery in the spring, restoring it to its former art deco glory.

Back in 1927, the place was known as Peter Pan Lunch, but the stained glass and pressed tin ceiling date back to the Victorian era.

In fact, Goldberg points out that there has been a restaurant in this building since the 1890s.

Enter Peter Pan and one feels the convergence of old and new. The polished wood of the original art deco banquettes gleams as does the long white marble bar. Despite its Victorian roots and art deco fixtures the restaurant has a modern feel.

On this sunny Friday afternoon, the mood in the kitchen is upbeat as the chefs and sous-chefs prepare for dinner. They strain an emerald-coloured pea soup through a fine mesh, white and green asparagus are trimmed and ready for grilling, and miniature challahs are rising on large baking pans on the counter.

Yes, Goldberg serves challah on Friday night. "We have a bread program. Every bread is made in-house every day," he explains. "I have a baker who's here with us. We have four different sourdoughs and we do challah on Fridays. We use the left-over challah for French toast for weekend brunches."

He says the menu changes weekly. "It's driven by what's fresh on the market and seasonal."

He even serves fiddleheads and nettles when they're in season.

A popular item, salmon roulade, is teamed with hand-made latkes, but salmon panzanella, poached salmon served in a vinaigrette with tomatoes and watercress, is also on the menu.

There are also a variety of salads – arugula with mushrooms and goat cheese, or grilled asparagus with enoki mushrooms and Parmesan.

Goldberg's career path has not followed a traditional trajectory. He was an economics major at Queen's University, when he discovered cooking, he says. "It was a life skill I fell in love with.

"I was making my own pasta, entertaining friends. Sharing a meal together reminded me of Friday night dinners with the family."

Rather than attend a traditional chef school, Goldberg trained with some of the world's leading chefs. "The cool thing about becoming a chef is apprenticing. You're freelance. It's very hands-on."

His first job was in Toronto. "I worked under Susur Lee, the pre-eminent chef. He brought fusion to the table."

Goldberg spent two years in New York City, in the kitchen of international restaurateur, Daniel Boulud, "one of the big French chefs," before heading to London, England, for a stint at St. John restaurant.

Back in Toronto he learned butchering skills at St Lawrence Market, and for six months, he ran the Feasting Room, a pop-up project.

Goldberg's advice to aspiring young chefs is to choose apprenticeships wisely. "Work at the best kitchen you can find. It's better to start at a lower position somewhere great than at a higher position at a lesser place."

And making the time commitment is critical, he adds. "Be prepared to put in the hours – 16-hour days five to six days a week."

Noah Goldberg
BARBARA SILVERSTEIN PHOTO

Peter Pan miniature challahs

- ❑ 2 tsp. sugar
- ❑ 1/2 cup warm water
- ❑ 7 g instant dry yeast
- ❑ 1/2 cup oil
- ❑ 1/2 cup warm water
- ❑ 1/4 cup sugar
- ❑ 4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 2 eggs
- ❑ 4 cups flour
- ❑ sesame seeds
- ❑ 1 egg beaten with 1 tsp. water

Combine 1 tsp. sugar and 1/2 cup warm water. Let sugar dissolve in water. Add yeast to sugar and water, dissolve and let foam, roughly 10 minutes.

In a separate bowl mix eggs, 1/2 cup warm water and oil. Add to yeast mixture. Combine with sugar, salt, flour. Add half the flour and mix until fully combined. It should be the consistency of batter.

Slowly combine the rest of the flour until the dough becomes soft and tacky. Proof until dough doubles in size (roughly 1 hour). Punch down dough. Let the dough rise again until it doubles (roughly half an hour). For individual challahs, divide dough in 1-oz. portions. Take three 1-oz ounce portions, roll into long logs and braid the challah. Let proof with a damp towel on top until dough doubles in size, (roughly 20 minutes).

Brush the top of the challah with egg wash, and sprinkle on salt and sesame seeds. Bake at 400 for 13 minutes. ■

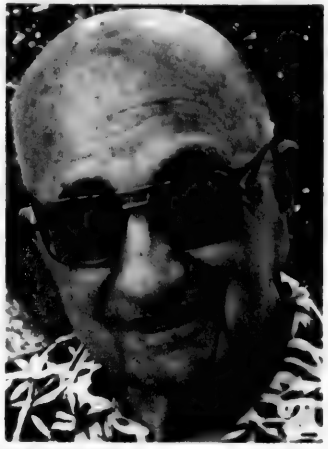
THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 22, 2015

Frederick Krantz: conference to examine Fackenheim's works

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Emil Fackenheim was a philosopher, a teacher, a rabbi at Holy Blossom Temple and a committed Zionist. Although he wrote on a number of topics, he is particularly well known for his proposed 614th mitzvah that enjoins Jews from handing Hitler a posthumous victory. But that is not all there is to Fackenheim, explains Prof. Frederick Krantz. Krantz and the organization he heads, the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research (CIJR) is teaming with Toronto's Beth Tikvah Synagogue to host the annual Sabina Citron International Conference that will examine the Jewish thought of Emil Fackenheim. The event will take place Oct. 25 and include a video presentation by Holocaust scholar Elie Wiesel.

Frederick Krantz



Emil Fackenheim

Why is it important to hold a conference on Emil Fackenheim at this time?

I think there are two related reasons. One is the power and force of his Jewish thought and philosophy. It's a little more than 10 years since his death, and it's traditional to remember a great person, a great scholar, after his 10th yahrzeit.

The second reason for doing this is that this body of thought, expressed in a series of fundamental works, touches precisely on many of the issues we're confronting today. He was concerned with the Holocaust and its implications for modernity, the expression through Holocaust revisionism of denial of the Holocaust, and the growth of anti-Semitism. He was one of the first people to see a new anti-Semitism emerging focused on the State of Israel as sort of the Jew in the world system. His thought is directly connected to the problems that we as Jewish people and more broadly men and women of good intentions face. His thought is alive.

Did you know him personally?

I became very close with Emil. I met him when I first came to teach in Canada after 1969. I was an American by origin. He was running a seminar in Toronto called the Canadian Seminar on Zionist Thought. It was set up after the 1967 war to involved Jewish and non-Jewish academics in the study of Zionism and the State of Israel.

I met this incredible, overpowering character who swept me off my feet with the depth of his learning and the seriousness of his thought. He was a wonderful, sweet, good and at times a funny guy.

He had a major impact on me. Through Emil, in large part, I came back to a sense of my own Jewishness and an awareness of Jewish history and of anti-Semitism.

> *He was not a pessimistic thinker in terms of focusing on the horror of the Holocaust. He was profoundly optimistic. It was a miracle for him that the Jewish People survived.*

What sort of audience are you hoping to attract?

A mixed audience. It is an academic conference and the people presenting are distinguished academics of great reputation, primarily Americans and Canadians. At the same time, it is open to the public, because we want to showcase his vision, his thought. In his work, he was always addressing the public.

It is important to realize he was not simply an academic speaking to other academics. He had a vision, almost a prophetic vision, of the need to keep issues alive.

Did Fackenheim's influence extend beyond the academic world to that of the average Jew?

I think he had broad support, not only among Jews but among Christians and secular people.

His works were quite popular. He wrote *To Mend the World*, he wrote *The Jewish Return into History*. He was a philosopher by training and he wrote a wonderful series of books about the German philosophical tradition, from Fichte in the early 19th century to Hegel.

He was not a pessimistic thinker in terms of focusing on the horror of the Holocaust. He was profoundly optimistic. It was a miracle for him that the Jewish People survived. He said in many of his works that the common-sense thing you'd think would have happened after 1945 was that Jews would convert to Christianity or divest themselves of Jewish identity, for fear that the horror would return and that their children would be caught. He said it was a great miracle that the reverse in fact happened and that Jews of all kinds of identity reaffirmed the nature of their Jewishness, their commitment.

He is well known for his "614th mitzvah." Can you describe what it is?

He invented the "614th mitzvah" (commandment). In our Hebrew Bible, there are 613 laws you are commanded to observe, and Emil in his work came up with a new mitzvah: "Thou shalt not give posthumous victories to Hitler."

That can have many interpretations. How do you see it?

I think the broadest meaning of that injunction is that Jews, but not only Jews, should act so as not to divide the Jewish community. They should support the Jewish State of Israel. It's a fundamental moral, ethical duty.

Emil had no illusions that Israel was perfect, but to him it was a miracle that the state came into existence three years after the Holocaust and through a courageous military struggle against the Arab world's attempt to destroy that state in its cradle. This to him could not be understood in simply secular terms. There was some kind of miraculous quality to it, particularly after 1967 [during the Six Day War], when it looked like the Holocaust could happen again.

Israel was alone, but it triumphed. These things were sort of eruptions of the divine into the unfolding of secular history. For him, God was alive and well in world history and one has to understand that about his work.

One of the critiques of the 614th mitzvah is that it seems negative, to keep one's Judaism not because of the positive aspects of Judaism, but to spite Hitler. How do you see it?

No that's not correct. You keep your Judaism because Judaism is of great value. He held that Judaism is destined to play a role in the salvation of all mankind. That's what our Bible is all about. The Jews are not simply the Chosen People because God couldn't care less about anybody else. The Jews are chosen to carry a heavier burden than others in order to ensure the ultimate salvation of all mankind. That's what Jewish messianism is all about.

Judaism represented for Emil a profound valuable and beautiful phenomenon that is part of world history and part of coming up with a better world. He wrote his book *To Mend the World*, which taken from the concept of tikkun olam, that the moral imperative for Jews is to play a role in perfecting society.

What additional books did Fackenheim write?

One of the last things he wrote was a book called *What is Judaism?* And one of things he said in that book is that the God of the Bible, who is also the God of Christianity and the God of Islam, is alive. Emil was a man of faith, and profoundly so.

Emil was also very Jewish. In Judaism you're called upon to act. You are not simply waiting for God to come to your aid. God put you in the world and gave you values, and you ought to act. Man acts in history. Man is free. So at the same time, he could see God's finger writing in history, he understood that history is not passive, that man has to take control, that you have to act on your morality, your ethics. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

The great illusion revisited

Backstory

EROL ARAF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

One hundred years ago, men of war were pulverizing the earth from the Marne to the rivers of Babylon.

This came as a surprise to many thoughtful English observers of war and peace in a new century. Indeed, according to the fashionable progressive ethos of the time, conflict among nations had become obsolete, as diplomacy would resolve international disputes and economic integration would render wars of conquests unproductive.

This was the essence of Norman Angell's book *The Great Illusion* published in 1909, an instant best-seller and the intellectual foundation of a new liberal cult. Angell's "greatest disciple," according to Barbara W. Tuchman, writing in *The Guns of August*, was Viscount Esher, a close friend of King George V and the chairman of the Imperial War committee on restructuring the British Army after the Boer War. Convinced that a European war was a great illusion, the good lord gave a series of lectures on the subject at both Cambridge and the Sorbonne, strongly arguing that "new economic factors clearly prove the insanity of aggressive wars."

A 20th century war would be on such a scale that its inevitable consequences of "commercial disaster, financial ruin and individual suffering" would be "so pregnant with restraining influences" as to make war unthinkable. He gave a copy of Angell's work to the German general Friedrich von Bernhardi, who was writing a book entitled *Germany and the Next War*. The chapter headings were most illuminating and featured gems like *The Right to Make War, The Duty to Make War* and *World Power or Downfall*.

In their clubs, the Angell faithful expressed surprise at German militarist candour but dismissed it, as they were convinced that "historical forces" would eventually steer Berlin into the sanguine realms of reason and common sense. With quintessential English condescension, they argued that continentals being continentals often said things they really did not mean.

While the British and French displayed their geopolitical phlegmatic demeanour and insouciance, – with many notable exceptions like the young Winston Churchill and Lord Fisher - the German General Staff was being drilled in theories of war as biological necessity. These were zero sum game notions of race, power, land and honour misappropriated from Darwin and regurgitated through the ramblings of Treitschke: potent elixirs served in Imperial German seraglios of war. The "Kaiserites" were from Mars; the leaders and liberal intellectuals of the Western Democracies were from the realm of the Roman goddess Pax, residing in a gentler place.

From time immemorial, history has shown that nations, confronted with hegemonic powers have not been able to contain their expansionist foes with reason and diplomacy alone. The history of war is the history of the failure of diplomacy. True, there are examples where diplomacy can delay the inevitable for a while. But, this the exception and not the rule. Edward N. Luttwak's monumental *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* is about the history of that exception. How many historical examples can we provide where a weak power relies less on military strength and more on persuasion and gets away with it for 1,058 years? Sooner or later, the vacuum created by the weak is filled by the strong and, finally, even dexterous Constantinople falls before the Ottoman surge.

Currently, we are subjected to a veritable barrage of commentary extolling the virtues of the Iran Deal with particular emphasis on how alleged Iranian economic self-interest would moderate its behaviour, and that the more Tehran is integrated into the global economic order, with billions pouring into its coffers, the more vested the Persian theocracy would become in the maintenance of regional peace, order and stability. One author went so far as to remind us "It's The Economy Stupid," arguing that the issue is not self-monitoring Iran collecting air and soil samples at suspected nuclear weaponisation sites, but how the promised economic nirvana would help both "Israel and Iran." Happy times are here again!

In a celebrated letter to Frederic the Great, Voltaire wrote "History does not repeat itself, men do." Pursuing the same old failed policies of appeasement with annihilationist foes and expecting to wake up in Elysium instead of drowning in blood-soaked trenches is the only Great Illusion. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Liba Berry	Sep 26/15	3 Winston Avenue
Alan Freeman	Sep 28/15	110 Promenade Circle
Gordon Ross	Sep 27/15	3900 Yonge Street
Elias Isgut	Sep 22/15	235 Bloor Street East
Diana Lass	Sep 28/15	469 Roselawn Avenue
Rita Simon	Sep 29/15	3560 Bathurst Street
Tillie Paulin	Sep 30/15	1 Post Road
Renee Hope Roth	Sep 29/15	160 Armour Blvd.
Jayson Robert Deletroz	Sep 30/15	35 Glen Everest Road
Leon Weinryb	Oct 1/15	85 Skymark Drive
Tamara Schildkraut	Oct 2/15	25 Brunswick Avenue
Morris (Mote) Weldman	Oct 3/15	85 Skymark Drive
Ronen Fleischmann	Oct 3/15	503 St. Germain Avenue
Ruth Frankel-Graner	Oct 4/15	343 Clark Avenue West
Rachel Renee Lewin	Oct 2/15	5351 Yonge Street
Niki Bledin	Oct 5/15	18A Hazelton Avenue
Andrew Adler	Oct 5/15	625 Avenue Road
Joseph Warren	Oct 4/15	252 Maxwell Street
Edith Altschuler	Oct 5/15	1 Benvenuto Place
Rose Roth	Oct 5/15	33 Delisle Avenue
Marilyn Goldman	Oct 7/15	112 Heddington Avenue
Miriam Kelson	Oct 5/15	57 Orchard Heights Blvd.
Marilyn Levin	Oct 7/15	662 Sheppard Ave. East
Harvey Sugar	Oct 7/15	550 Cummer Avenue
Reuben Merrick	Oct 7/15	400 Walmer Road, West Tower
Bernard Sussman	Oct 8/15	69 Innisbrook Crescent
Miriam Freedman	Oct 7/15	866 Sheppard Ave. West
Ruth Somers	Oct 9/15	3560 Bathurst Street
Harvey Mandel	Oct 9/15	100 Promenade Cir.

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Shulman, Evelyn	Sept. 30, 2015	10 Shallmar Blvd
Aharon, Tivia	Sept. 30, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Kutner, Belle	Oct. 1, 2015	6200 Bathurst St
Vilner, Mila	Oct. 1, 2015	115 Antibes Dr
Kalifer, Francine	Oct. 1, 2015	19 Cadillac Ave
Joseph, Jacob Jonathan	Oct. 1, 2015	Private
Ezer, Eliahou	Oct. 2, 2015	22 Norfinch Dr
Erlich, Marek	Oct. 2, 2015	Private
Malchiondo, Sam	Oct. 2, 2015	9 Fraserwood Ave
Dresher, Max	Oct. 3, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Wolfovich, Hersh	Oct. 4, 2015	6250 Bathurst St
Posner, Pearl	Oct. 4, 2015	541 Finch Ave W
Tannenbaum, Eugene	Oct. 4, 2015	48 Artreeva Dr
Newman, Piri	Oct. 4, 2015	57 Heatherton Way
Rosenberg, Donald	Oct. 4, 2015	131 Torresdale Ave
Raiman, Ruth	Oct. 5, 2015	170 Red Maple Rd
Avshalomov, Boris	Oct. 6, 2015	5 Fisherville Rd
Zawierucha, Marcelle	Oct. 6, 2015	3830 Bathurst St
Borst, Judy Pearl	Oct. 6, 2015	5444 Yonge St
Dor, Nina	Oct. 7, 2015	Private
Goldberg, Tillie	Oct. 7, 2015	262 St. Clair Ave W
Britan, Iris	Oct. 8, 2015	4 Fraserwood Ave
Garnick, Bessie	Oct. 8, 2015	718 Sheppard Ave W
Lipovenko, Isadore	Oct. 9, 2015	147 Elder St
Sklar, Roger	Oct. 9, 2015	134 Chelmsford Ave
Ross, Zena	Oct. 9, 2015	30 Fashion Roseway
Konstantinoskaya, Zinaida	Oct. 10, 2015	Private
Roness, Beatrice	Oct. 11, 2015	3560 Bathurst St

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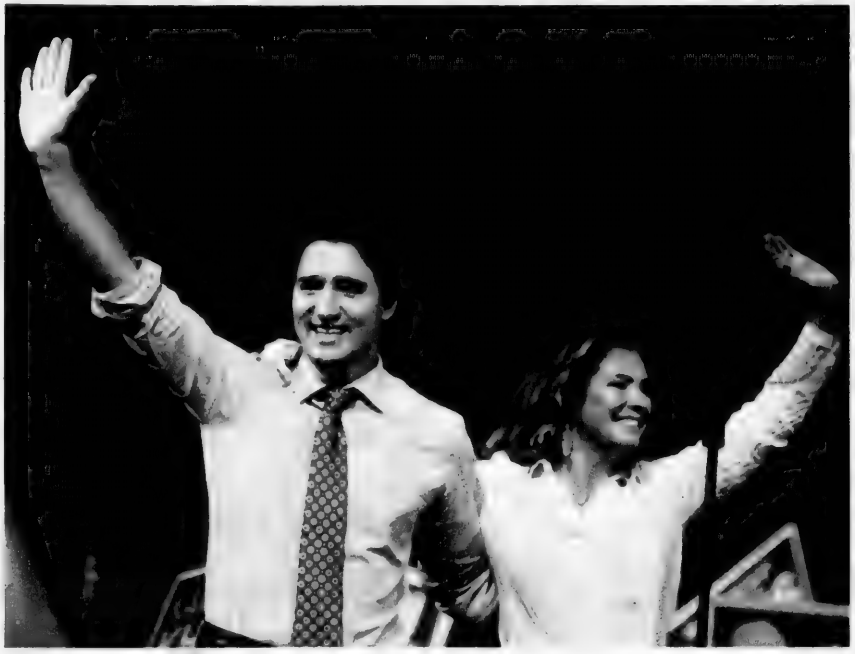
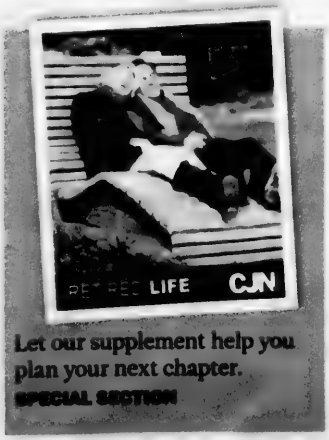


Trudeau's victory, Harper's legacy

What will the election results mean for Canadian Jews? *The CJN* investigates. **PAGES 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22, 23**



Let our supplement help you plan your next chapter.
SPECIAL SECTION

Vayera

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	5:48 p.m.	6:50 p.m.
Montreal	5:26 p.m.	6:29 p.m.
Ottawa	5:35 p.m.	6:38 p.m.
Toronto	5:53 p.m.	6:55 p.m.
Winnipeg	5:51 p.m.	6:58 p.m.
Calgary	5:56 p.m.	7:04 p.m.
Vancouver	5:36 p.m.	6:42 p.m.

6 27843 39403 7

Howie Rothman laid to rest in Israel

Canadian-Israeli wounded in 2014 Har Nof synagogue attack dies of his injuries. **PAGE 30**

How can Israel fight media bias?

Honest Reporting's Gary Kenzer explains why social channels could be the key. **Q&A PAGE 50**

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How to know if you've been stabbed, and a match made in heaven...?

JSwipe and JDate hook up

After a public battle over the trademark of the letter "J," Jewish dating services JDate and JSwipe have kissed and hooked up. Spark Networks, owner of JDate and several non-Jewish dating sites, said earlier this month it purchased Smooch Labs, the firm behind the mobile dating app JSwipe. The price will be announced when Spark releases its fourth-quarter financials. The older and larger JDate sued JSwipe last year, claiming a trademark on the letter "J" for dating sites and a patent on technology that helps users find matches. JSwipe's founder, David Yarus, launched an unsuccessful crowdsourcing campaign to pay for more than $300,000 in legal fees. JDate has more than 750,000 users, while JSwipe has surpassed 450,000.

In case it may not be obvious

As violence escalates in Israel, two Jerusalemites have developed a satirical

Have you been stabbed yet? Find out online

website that asks "Have I Been Stabbed Yet?" A questionnaire lets users figure out "if they are already dead," asking their location – stay away from Jerusalem, it warns – their Jewish appearance (if applicable), and whether they'd summon Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat if they encounter trouble. (Barkat has personally helped subdue several attackers.) Copywriter Shalom Shore and app developer Dan Bystrisky say they created the site to "break the tension" in Israel. "For us, humour is a way to cope, to come to terms with the experience," Shore says. The duo recognizes some won't appreciate their humour, but insist the goal is not to offend anyone, "except for terrorists."

Soccer player sues over Nazi doll

German soccer star Bastian Schweinsteiger is suing a Hong Kong company for making a doll dressed as a Nazi soldier that clearly looks like him. The company, DiD, denied the 30-cm-high doll, named Bastian, was made to look like the player, saying the resemblance is coincidental. The figurine is "based on the typical German," a company representative told the *Bild* newspaper. "We thought that all Germans look like that." Schweinsteiger plays for Manchester United and captains the German national team. ■

Gematria

150

The number of prominent Britons, including Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling, who wrote an open letter to the *Guardian* newspaper against a cultural boycott of Israel.

40%

The percentage of 249 Conservative rabbis in a new email survey who said they'd officiate at intermarriages if allowed to do so.

Quotable

I'm concerned about people in North America reading the news about Israel from Israeli news sources online, because it tends to be very political.

— Gary Kenzer of media watchdog Honest Reporting USA. More on page 50.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz's guide to free Jewish lectures on iTunes

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

CIJA responsive to refugees

Mitchell Goldberg and Rabbi Arthur Bielfeld's column on Syrian refugees is a gratuitous attack on the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) that simply does not reflect the facts ("The time to act on the crisis is now," Oct. 15).

Contrary to the authors' suggestion, in 2012 CIJA publicly urged the government to maintain equal health care coverage for refugee applicants regardless of their country of origin. We likewise called on the government to avoid separating families (as sometimes occurs) that come to Canada under irregular conditions, re-unify those families quickly when separation is unavoidable, and speed up the process for such claimants to sponsor their families.

In response to the Syrian crisis, CIJA mobilized community members to sponsor refugees, providing information on the process so synagogues and families can get involved through the exceptional work of groups like JIAS and Lifeline Syria. CIJA is also a longstanding member of the Multi-faith Alliance for Syrian Refugees and facilitated a comprehensive political program for its leadership when it made representations in Ottawa some months ago. CIJA is also working directly with the Jordanian government in raising funds to aid the 650,000 refugees currently in Jordan, which will remain home to far more Syrian refugees than Canada could ever admit.

Those who want CIJA to promote a partisan agenda, which for many this issue has become, are unwittingly asking for CIJA and its federation partners to violate Canada Revenue Agency regulations, which explicitly prohibit registered charities from doing so, most especially during an election campaign. CIJA cannot and will not jeopardize the good standing of the federation community to satisfy the parochial and partisan needs of any segment of our constituency.

David J. Cape, chair, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
Montreal

Rabin's vision

On this sad anniversary of Israeli prime minister's Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, one can't help but wonder if Rabin would be honest about this "vision" and the Oslo accords if he were still alive today ("Realizing Yitzhak Rabin's vision," Oct. 22).

The knife-wielding Oslo generation of Palestinians has now come of age, just the latest murderous graduates of 20 years of Oslo-created PA hate schools, hate textbooks, and hate television stations.

Would Rabin have the integrity to admit that non-stop barbarism for two decades has been the only result of our delusional adherence to the so-called two-state solution?

Would he now encourage the nation to finally let go of this deadly concept, proven false so many times, and effect our full and rightful sovereignty over the whole land?

Would he have the humility to admit that he and all the other well-intentioned Israeli leaders since the 1990s have been spectacularly and fatally wrong?

Steve Mitchell
Toronto

Post-election regrets

I am sad to read that we Jews have not yet learned, that when we have been uniquely privileged to have as our prime minister a righteous supporter of the State of Israel, we shoot ourselves in the foot and vote for candidates whose affinity is for the Muslim world.

Stephen Harper has stood with Israel through thick and thin, standing up for what is right, as the best friend Israel had in a world increasingly hostile to Israel and Jews. We should have all stood in gratitude with Harper, especially in a riding like Mount Royal, where the Jewish vote could have actually made a difference.

Susan Pollak
Toronto

Niqab isn't our problem

Barbara Kay suggests that the niqab represents "a triumphalist ideology" that will support Islamist efforts to "colonize and transform western democracies" ("Rejection of the niqab is self-defence, not racism," Oct. 15).

If our western democracy is so fragile it can't withstand a handful of women wearing veils at a citizenship ceremony, then we truly have much bigger problems to worry about.

Rob Krakauer
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**
We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.

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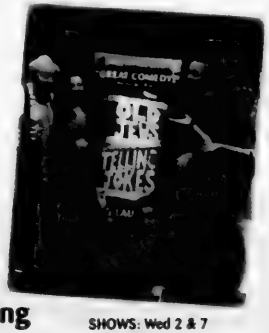

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RABBI-2-RABBI

Out of difference comes strength

The Jewish community's diversity of opinion on a wide variety of issues is derived from the way Israel's early sages saw the Torah itself

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Splansky: I listen carefully to the stories told by each generation of my congregation, and I am a student of our history as Toronto's first synagogue.

To be sure, there have always been differences in political points of view and in religious observance. There have always been small-town Jews and urban Jews; rich Jews and poor Jews; Jews with big families and Jews with small ones; and Jews whose parents or grandparents came from over here or over there.

And yet, it seems the range of experiences and opinions, beliefs and practices today is even more widespread than just one generation ago. Studies give data to underscore what we already knew to be true.

Rabbi Fishman: Two Jews, three opinions – where there are Jews, there is bound to be a difference of opinion.

I believe that this sense of multiple perspectives concerning almost everything is derived from the way Israel's early sages saw the Torah itself. They taught: "Behold, my word is like fire – declares the Lord – and like a hammer that shatters rock" (Jeremiah 23:29).

Just as this hammer produces many sparks when it strikes the rock, so a single verse has several meanings.

What is the "true" meaning of any verse in the Torah? There is no singular answer. Deep down, our essential state of being is to draw multiple – and sometimes mutually exclusive –approaches to everything our people is faced with.

Rabbi Splansky: Synagogues can be a great equalizer, though. On Shabbat, every congregant is honoured for his insight shared at the Torah study table, for her voice that enriches the communal prayer, for their recent loss, for their upcoming simchah. There aren't many places in life that allow for such diversity of character and celebrate it.

Synagogues are often quietly accused of being monolithic and liking it that way. But in my experience, synagogue communities are diverse in their make-up and creatively make space for everyone.

More than that, it is considered a sacred obligation to do so.

Rabbi Fishman: Yes, absolutely.

What I find deeply uplifting is the sense of the whole community coming together, and yet the community comprises so many different sub-groups of people. Some are praying to find a job and put food on the table, while others attend services to say a farewell before their round-the-world trip. Some come to pray for a successful upcoming surgery, while others wish to give thanks and appreciation for the good health they are fortunate enough to have.

And some don't come to pray at all. Rather, they gather for conversation and the social opportunity synagogues provide.

Rabbi Splansky: The 613th commandment must be about more than writing the script of a Torah scroll by our own hand. It calls on us to write relevant Torah in each generation, and that, by definition, we can only do together with others.

The text is fixed, but as the rabbinic tradition insists, interpretation of the text has 70 facets. Diversity of opinion is required in order to discover the truth locked in the text.

This approach is "good for the Jews," so long as each participant is anchored in collective memory, invested in a shared destiny and motivated by them both.

Rabbi Fishman: Rabbi Yaakov Emden (1697-1776) was sure that the text for Kol Nidrei, the declaration of annulling vows on the eve of Yom Kippur, was focused on promises that were made in the previous year. However, another line of reasoning based on the great legal authority Rabbeinu Tam (1100-1171) argued that the proper text should focus on those vows which concern the upcoming year.

Rabbeinu Tam decided to approve a text that combined both versions, explaining his position as one of respect: "since it came from the mouth of that saintly man."

With appropriate honour and a reverence for those we disagree with, perhaps our community can be more inclusive than dismissive. The open-ended possibilities are truly limitless. ■

Every winter, we like to go down south. Who needs the cold at our age? Last year, we signed up for the Benjamin's Funeral Service Listings email. It gives us peace of mind to know that if someone in our community dies, we won't miss the chance to send our condolences. Benjamin's updates us every day – a free service that helps us stay in touch.

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Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation: July 14, 2015

Canadian Heritage / Patrimoine canadien

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Postage Paid at Toronto Canada Post Publication Agreement #40010684
*Under current ownership

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS

CJN

An independent community newspaper serving as a forum for diverse viewpoints

Publisher and Proprietor The Canadian Jewish News, a corporation without share capital. Head Office: 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord Ont. L4K 2L7

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From the Archives | Group photo

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE, FONDS 18, SERIES 3-6, FILE 9

The Radomer Mutual Benefit Society officers are seen in 1964. Chartered in 1925, the society occupied a leading position in the Jewish community.

SeeJN | Shabbat Project challah bakers

The Challah Bake, an initiative of Shabbat Project Toronto, took place Oct. 22 at the Scarborough Convention Centre and was attended by 2,400 people. Pictured at the event are Shira Lipner, left, and Talia Edell.

From Yoni's Desk

An election that left more questions than answers

Driving along Dupont Street in Toronto on Saturday night, you might have noticed something rather peculiar. Planted in a narrow strip of soil adjacent to a mostly empty supermarket parking lot stood three election campaign signs, one each for Mark Adler, Michael Levitt and Hal Berman, the Conservative, Liberal and NDP candidates, respectively, in the riding of York Centre.

Perhaps, you could have thought to yourself, the campaign staffers tasked with collecting lawn signs in the days after the Oct. 19 federal election had simply missed this troika. Except that explanation would inevitably raise more questions – namely, why would three York Centre candidates have been campaigning in the University-Rosedale riding? And if they hadn't been, as was surely the case, then how had these signs seemingly travelled more than 10 kilometres southward on their own?

Failing to make any sense of this, you could have concluded that perhaps the signs were meant to offer some sort of statement on the campaign that just concluded – something about the deep entrenchment of politics in our daily lives, even after the battle has been won and lost. Or maybe someone had left the signs out, like an old sofa, hoping they would find a good home elsewhere.

Whatever the explanation, the mystery of the misplaced signs might stand as a symbol of the uncertainty left in the wake of the federal election. In this week's *CJN*, we begin to examine how the results could affect the Canadian Jewish community. Sheri Shefa reports on Prime Minister-elect Justin Trudeau's momentous victory, and the legacy of outgoing Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Meanwhile, Benjamin Shinewald suggests that the Liberal triumph signals a new day for Canadian Jews, while Michael Diamond argues that the Conservative defeat will be a bitter pill to swallow for our community. And in his final Campaign Notebook column, Daniel Wolgelerenter wonders how the election might affect Jewish community organizations.

There are few answers so soon after the election, of course. For now, all we can do is ask the questions.

• • •

It's no stretch to connect the Holocaust to the ongoing Palestinian terror attacks in Israel. Just as the Nazis' ultimate aim was to rid Europe of Jews, the goal of Palestinian terror groups, aided and abetted by some political leaders as well as terror-sponsoring governments in the region, is to purge the Middle East of the Jewish state. Much has changed in the 70 years since the end of the Shoah, most significantly Israel's ability to defend its citizens, but the existential danger remains.

Accordingly, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is more than justified in linking the Holocaust to Palestinian terror. But his comments last week to the effect that Hitler had no intention of exterminating the Jews until Haj Amin al-Husseini, the grand mufti of Jerusalem, convinced him to implement the Final Solution, are categorically false. No less than the chief historian of Yad Vashem has said that the version of events described by Netanyahu is simply "not true."

There is more than enough misinformation out there for anti-Semites and terrorists to seize upon. Jewish leaders should do their best to clarify our history, not muddle it. ■ — YONI

Reflections

The benefits of reunification

Stuart Lewis

"The past," wrote William Faulkner, "is never dead. It's not even past."

Nov 9 marks the 26th anniversary of an event that seemed to most of the world at that time beyond improbable: the relatively abrupt fall of the Berlin Wall and, a year later, the reunification of East and West Germany.

I think a lot about the fall of the Berlin Wall. I am not German nor did I have family from there. I am a Jew, born in the United Kingdom and raised in Canada. And as improbable as those events were in the course of history, I have my own improbable story – linked to that Wall.

In June 1983, I was backpacking my way through Europe. I began the year working on a kibbutz for several months before my European arrival. Having been a political science major, the possibility of visiting East Berlin exerted a gravitational pull on me that was irresistible. Curiosity came into play as well. Growing up in Toronto's Bathurst Manor meant having friends whose parents were Holocaust survivors. None in our family were. Still, I developed a poisonous aversion to all things German. Years later I would refuse to allow my fiancé to consider registering for German-made cutlery. (I lost that battle.)

East Berlin was exactly as one would expect having read a John Le Carré novel. Crossing through Checkpoint Charlie with a couple of Americans, the world of colour suddenly seemed to turn to black and white. Nothing much had changed since World War II. I could still make out the strafing marks of artillery on the grey walls of many buildings I walked past.

We stopped at a small cafe and invited a couple of East Berliners our age to join us. They showed us around, and we talked about life behind the Iron Curtain. At the end of our day I suggested to my new Communist friend that we keep in touch. We exchanged addresses. A few months later and back in Israel, I received my first letter from Frank.

By the end of 1983, I returned to Toronto and Frank and I continued writing to each other. We talked about politics mostly, but our lives crept into the dialogue, too. Frank was absurdly worldly compared to me. He was intellectual and read widely. He played the saxophone and was addicted to American jazz. He loved everything from philosophy to movies. I confessed to him that he was the first German I knew. He confessed that I was the first Jew he had ever met.

But there was a question lodged in the back of my mind from the day I met him: "Frank, what did your father do in the war?" It took me almost three decades to finally ask him that question. It was that question and the test in the knowing that would be an indirect catalyst to my own reunification.

• • •

For 40 years, my father and I had been living on either side of our own Berlin Wall. A big-talking, charming, slap-on-the-back salesman, he was always "this close" to the Big Score. One day he never returned from a business trip to the Far East and our family now three of us (mom, myself and younger brother) was abandoned. Seven years later I found out he had a new family. I hated him.

In September of 2014, my father and I made one last attempt at reconciliation. I was tired of the hating, of the grip that my hate for him had on me. Being with him was at first awkward and uncomfortable. I refused to call him "Dad," but we were making progress. Then in late December 2014 I found out that he had been hospitalized. The weeks passed and his condition continued to decline.

Stuart Lewis's father

> *We made a choice and the wall between us came down.*

"I want to show you something," said his third wife. It was a green military beret. "It belongs to your father."

I said I had no idea what she was talking about. She gave me a puzzled look. "Stuart, has your father not told you what he did in the war?"

"No. What war?"

• • •

In one of his letters, Frank said that while the benefits of reunification were undeniable, for many East Germans the sudden and powerful inrushing of new freedoms and opportunities created a kind of anxiety. We fear what we do not know.

I was afraid of what I might come to know of my father. I was afraid that I might lose the moral clarity of seeing the world we shared as black and white.

It became clear that he was going to die. It would only be a matter of time. In the days that followed we talked in great detail about his experiences in the Korean War. I often sat on the edge of the bed beside him. He had been a member of an elite squad of Royal Marine commandos. I realized my father was someone I knew in an extremely limited way. In that role as father and husband I remembered him as an unmitigated disaster. But as a soldier my father had been a success. He revealed horrific and gruesome battle stories to me. I now know I am here because of his heroic actions.

He died on Feb. 11.

I am not ready to forgive my father particularly for abandoning my mother. But I no longer hate him. I understand that his life might have been more complicated than I was willing to allow. Maybe it's because I was afraid of what I might find. It can be easier standing on one side of the wall talking about "them" while we comfort ourselves on our side talking about "us."

At the end of the day, however, there is no "us" and "them." Only "us." Faulkner was right – up to a point. The past is never past. It will always be with us. He was wrong, however, to pretend that the past determines our future.

The ultimate lesson I learned at the Berlin Wall is that our biases and prejudices, our habits and predispositions – are not chosen for us. We choose them.

I never believed I could ever reunite with my estranged father. The hate was too real. I thought it was too late. But we made a choice and the wall between us came down. The past is a kind of wall. ■

Stuart Lewis blogs at www.lettersandwalls.com.

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A changing of the guard in Ottawa

What can Canadian Jews expect from Justin Trudeau? And how will the community remember Stephen Harper? **SHERI SHEFA** reports

When the votes in last week's election were counted and it became clear the Tories – unapologetically pro-Israel and economically conservative – would be replaced by a Liberal government, many in the Jewish community who were supporters of outgoing Prime Minister Stephen Harper took to social media to express fears about what Canada will look like under Justin Trudeau's leadership.

But according to Jewish community leaders and scholars, there's no reason to think Trudeau won't be supportive of Israel and Jews.

"I think it's foolish to doubt that Mr Trudeau will be anything but a friend of Israel," said Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies. "I think he will continue to foster a close diplomatic relationship with Israel, as he has given no indication of doing otherwise. I do feel, however, that it is unlikely that he will be as consistent and intense in his support of Israel as his predecessor."

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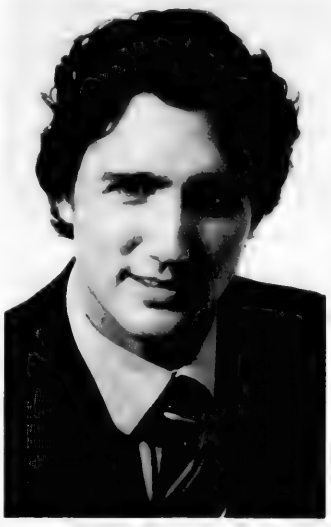

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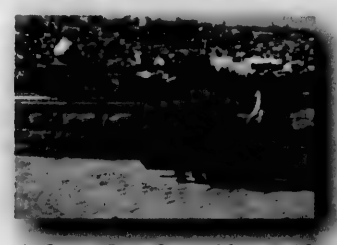

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For those who revered outgoing Prime Minister Stephen Harper for his principled stance on the Israeli-Arab conflict and for his support of the Jewish community, the Oct. 19 election was a sad day in Canadian history.

Following three consecutive election victories in 2006, 2008 and 2011 – the first time a Conservative party had accomplished this in more than 50 years – Justin Trudeau's Liberals succeeded in winning a majority government, ending Harper's decade-long run as Canada's leader.

For better or worse, Harper's legacy, in part, will be framed by his unwavering support of Israel and the Jews, and he'll be remembered by many in the Jewish community as the best friend Israel ever had.

Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies, said Harper's support of Israel and Canada's Jewish community was more than symbolic.

"I think Mr. Harper's outspoken support of Israel benefited the Jewish state and the Jewish community in a substantial way. This support was perhaps no more tangible than when he withdrew financial support for pro-Palestinian NGOs, including the Canadian Arab Federation, Kairos and Palestine House, because he felt these organizations were perpetuating domestic and international anti-Semitism," Benlolo said.

"Most relevant to the Jewish community here in Canada was Mr. Harper's signing of the Ottawa Protocol to Combat Anti-Semitism. The protocol was a historic declaration that hatred will not be tolerated in Canada. It also set out an action plan for supporting initiatives to combat anti-Semitism and provided a framework for other nations to follow."

Shimon Fogel, CEO and president of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, agreed that Harper's support for Israel was significant.

"Beyond the advances in the bilateral relationship – and there were many, including, military and intelligence co-operation, trade, innovation and technology, health care, agriculture, cyber security and the like – the role played by Canada in the diplomatic arena was vital for Israel," Fogel said.

Nelson Wiseman, a professor of political science at the University of Toronto, said although all Canadian parties are supportive of Israel, "obviously, he was the most outspoken of all the prime ministers we've had... The difference is that Harper was the most forward in his rhetoric, and that was acknowledged in Israel."

In 2014, Harper became the first Canadian prime minister to address the Knesset, and later that year, he was given an honorary degree from Tel Aviv University.

Stephen Harper

Wiseman said Harper also brought an unprecedented number of Jews into the Conservative party, both as contributors and as voters.

Myer Siemiatycki, a professor of politics and public administration at Ryerson University, said Harper's legacy, as it relates to Israel and Canadian Jews, "will be highly polarized."

"There will be, in the Jewish community, a sentiment among some that he was the greatest friend to Israel and world Jewry that Canada has ever produced, and there will be others who believe that his role was not a constructive one for Israel and that maybe even the whole enterprise of his approach to Israel had more to do with what Israel and the Jews could do for Harper than what he could do for Israel and the Jews," Siemiatycki said.

He added that he doesn't want to minimize the significance of Harper's consistent affirmations that pro-Israel Jews were not alone in their concern for the well-being of Israel.

"But the bigger question, in a way, is did that support tangibly produce benefits for Israel and would a different approach to Israel and the Palestinians and the Middle East yield more benefits? I have no doubt that for some Jews, Harper represented, and was, a feel-good ally, but did it go beyond that? I think that's debatable."

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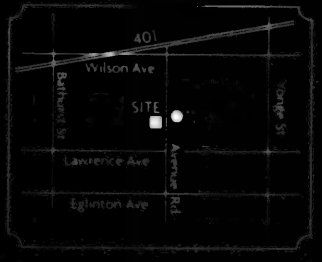

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Bar and bat mitzvah projects not just about money

Mira Sucharov

It's a bat mitzvah year in our family. We've booked the photographer, the caterer, the DJ and the invitation company. Our daughter is studying her parshah and learning to chant the Haftorah and Maftir.

Now it's time to inject some social justice into the experience, in the form of what have come to be known as "mitzvah projects." Coming of age in the 1980s, my generation was less social justice-oriented than today's. So what exactly, I wondered, should a "mitzvah project" entail?

I turned to JEDLAB – the Jewish educators' forum on Facebook – to get oriented. I discovered that there is an organization expressly founded to support kids in their mitzvah project strategies. Called Areyvut (Hebrew for "social responsibility"), the New-Jersey-based group offers consulting services – from a free phone consultation to more extensive, fee-based ones – and direct organizing of an array of hands-on, direct-action-style activities that party guests can participate in.

Called "chesed fairs," these might include game-board painting for a social-services agency, hat-making for cancer fighters, or cupcake-decorating for a local day centre. Clients need not live in the area – or even in the United States.

Elsewhere, Areyvut teams up with synagogues and youth groups to teach kids to be "mitzvah clowns" for residents of long-term care facilities.

I decided to take up Areyvut's offer to engage in a free phone consultation on my daughter's mitzvah project idea. She has chosen a complex topic – addressing the economic effects, particularly around access to housing, of urban gentrification. Talking to Areyvut's staff reminded me that mitzvah projects need not be confined to financial giving. Advocacy and awareness can be just as important.

I decided to take some of these ideas to my own community. Through word of mouth I initiated a b'nai mitzvah club to help develop mitzvah project ideas. At the first meeting – which we called "Hot Chocolate for Hot Issues," I led a workshop to get the kids thinking about a given issue, how to identify deeper causes of the problem and how to consider the range of action one might take to address these problems.

For our mitzvah club this year, each child will identify a pressing issue around which he or she is passionate and then develop an action plan, a plan that should involve at least two of the following: fundraising, political advocacy, public awareness and direct action. Fundraising could involve donating a portion of bar or bat mitzvah gift money, or holding a bakeathon or danceathon. Political advocacy might involve letter-writing to elected officials. Public awareness could include an Instagram campaign increasing public understanding of the issue. And direct action means identifying a relevant organization at which the child can volunteer.

Sometimes there is an identified need, but not an established organization dedicated to it. In these cases, Areyvut can support kids in being more ambitious – for example in creating their own non-profit organization. Billy's Baseballs grew out of a bar mitzvah initiative where a child organized the sending of decorated baseballs to soldiers stationed abroad.

Daniel Rothner, Areyvut's founder and director, puts it this way. As Jews, we are supposed to be a "light unto the nations," engaged in making the world a better place, he told me. And the impact extends beyond the Jewish community, he added. He is also passionate about getting kids to think about the deeper causes. What of Dave, the homeless man who appears at the soup kitchen every week? Why does Dave need to come week after week?

Our own b'nai mitzvah club has come a long way from kids reciting the "today I am a fountain pen" joke. As my daughter said, the bar or bat mitzvah milestone means that "technically you're becoming a woman or a man, and once you are [an adult] you have a responsibility to help out with the issues in the world and in our community." ■

Rabin's hope remains realized, to the Palestinians' shame

Mordechai Ben-Dat

In the late evening of Nov. 4, 1995, Israel's prime minister Yitzhak Rabin was gunned down in Tel Aviv. He was shot and killed by Yigal Amir, a young Israeli who had substituted violence for faith and rage for reason. Amir abused the name of God when he invoked it to murder another human being.

Twenty years have passed since that shocking, melancholy, distressing night. The 20th yahrzeit of that ghastly act was commemorated last week on the 12th day of Cheshvan.

Rabin was assassinated because his murderer objected to the prime minister's commitment to cede land to the Palestinians as enshrined in the Declarations of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (also known as the Oslo accords), signed on the White House lawn on Sept. 13, 1993.

Indeed, there were many others – in Israel and elsewhere – who, for varied reasons, warned against and objected to the signing of the Oslo accords. Rabin acknowledged the significant risks, but decided to seize what he believed was a truly historic opportunity.

Unfortunately, subsequent years have proven the failure of the accords. Rather than partners for peace, Palestinian leaders turned out to be prevaricators. The promises they made were false. The legal commitments they signed were ignored. The solemn utterances to audiences in Washington or Oslo about their embrace of non-violence were untrue.

When Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat walked away from negotiations with Israel at Camp David, some seven years after that hopeful handshake on the White House lawn, he knew that then-U.S. president Bill Clinton was alert to the Palestinian leader's duplicity. To provide a pretext for abjuring the resumption of talks with Israel, Arafat launched the suicide bombing intifadah in September 2000 in which so many men, women and children died violently.

Despite the ultimate failure of the Oslo accords, Rabin was correct to attempt to find a breakthrough with the Palestinian leaders. Not to have done so, he believed, would have betrayed the sanctity of the numerous prayers for peace that inspire the collective yearning of the Jewish People.

On Oct. 5, 1995, merely one month before he was killed, Rabin's final words to the Knesset on the ratification of the Oslo peace accords demonstrated that his vision of coexistence with the Palestinians was neither naïve nor delusional. While hopeful of securing a final agreement, he was clearly aware of possible pitfalls along the way.

"We view the permanent solution in the framework of the State of Israel, which will include most of the area of the Land of Israel as it was under the rule of the British Mandate, and alongside it a Palestinian entity, which will be a home to most of the Palestinian residents living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

"We would like this to be an entity which is less than a state and which will independently run the lives of the Palestinians under its authority. The borders of the State of Israel, during the permanent solution, will be beyond the lines which existed before the Six Day War. We will not return to the June 4, 1967 lines.

"Today we may be opening a new stage in the annals of the Jewish People and the State of Israel. We know the chances. We know the risks. We will do our best to expand the chances and reduce the risks.

"We appeal to Jews and Palestinians alike to act with restraint, to preserve human dignity, to behave in a fitting manner – and to live in peace and security. We are embarking upon a new path which could lead us to an era of peace, to the end of wars.

"That is our prayer. That is our hope."

That Rabin's hope was not realized resounds to the everlasting shame and disgrace of the Palestinian leaders. To this day, they extol victimhood, preach hatred and counsel the destruction of the Jewish state rather than the building of their own Palestinian state. And so, they continue to betray their own people and condemn them to statelessness.

What a tragedy. ■

Post-election musings on the mitzvah of public service

Rabbi Jay Kelman

When the Jewish People were first exiled from their land in the year 586 BCE, the prophet Jeremiah exhorted them to follow the laws of the land in which they found themselves. While we yearned to return to the Land of Israel, we were to see ourselves as loyal citizens of our countries of residence. Jewish law demands that we say a prayer for the welfare of the government, including those who were very far from democratic. How much more so must we who live in the wonderful country of Canada.

I pen these thoughts the day after the Canadian people elected a new, and likely a very different, government.

How blessed we are that leaders change without bloodshed and people can vote for change if they are so inclined. We must as loyal citizens and loyal Jews pray that the government be blessed with much success in its mandate to serve the country as best it can.

There is no greater calling in the Jewish tradition than public service. Serving in government is potentially one of the highest forms of public service. The ability to help so many, without fanfare or fame is almost unparalleled. While politics is often rough and brings out the negative all too often, many, and likely most, of these same politicians aim to, and are often very successful at, helping many people away from the limelight.

Political life can be gruelling – the divorce rate among politicians is much too high. Almost all of our elected officials could be earning much more in the private sector, and despite the often public outcry over their high salaries and generous pensions, it's the rare politician who enters public life to get ahead financially.

Most do it because they sincerely want to help people and strongly believe the best way to do so is through public office. There is little doubt that the political system often doesn't allow these high aspirations to be met, and we all suffer for that.

Our tradition teaches that the most important trait needed by those who want to serve the public is to be "motivated for the sake of heaven," to help others as best they can. While it's always good to be properly motivated, we generally place little importance on why we do what we do. Judaism primarily focuses on what we do, not why we do it.

Those who give lots of charity in order to get lots of honour are deserving of exactly that. Doing right is what matters, not why we do what's right – proper motivation is an added bonus when it occurs.

However, by definition, public service is different. Public service means balancing competing needs, each in its own right worthy of support, but in the aggregate, it's impossible to provide for all who need. One can debate whether it's wise to incur deficit spending (something that, if promises are kept, is on its way), but even those who support such spending are left billions of dollars short of doing all they want to do.

Decisions have to be made, and those decisions will inevitably benefit some and hurt others. If we increase spending on health care, we must cut somewhere else, such as education. Every dollar spent in one area is a dollar that could have been spent somewhere else. These decisions must be made with only one goal in mind – what is in the public interest.

Vigorous debate about what's best is healthy, but choices must be made. To "hurt" some because you're helping others is the price we must be willing to pay to enter public service. Doing such is a great mitzvah. But to promote policy or vote in a particular way because of some personal calculation – such as getting re-elected – means you'll be held personally responsible for the pain caused to others. Public service really isn't for everyone. ■

Send comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

We must speak out for Israel

Norma Baumel Joseph

I cannot get the image out of my head.

Not the one of the child dead on the shore, nor the one of the tearful mother at her son's grave. No – none of those terrifies me.

But that knife held aloft in the hands of shouting Palestinians, that large knife with a deeply grooved edge and a knuckle-duster handle. I visualize that knife entering a human body, silencing a voice, ending a life. That is terrifying.

How in the world did we reach such a frightening point in our history? Surely someone out there knows we collectively have suffered enough. Isn't it time we were left in peace?

Our story could easily be one of richness and great achievements. After all, we do have a state and a place for all Jews. And that state has many accomplishments to boast of. Talk of all the Nobel laureates or the economic gains, the Internet revolution and the medical discoveries. Even more astounding is the fact that Israel has just about solved the world's water problems. There is so much to be proud of, so much to lay claim to.

But what do we hear? Not praise, but moral indignation from foolish or hateful sources. The world seems to have a blind spot when it comes to Israel and the Jews. No one seems to feel the pain of the Israeli Jew who fears to take a bus ride or go for coffee, or is afraid of losing a son. Instead, they only hear misinformed or dis-informed tales that they immediately believe. Why?

Why doesn't the world care that my nieces and nephews are in danger, that my beloved sister-in-law is afraid to leave her house. My daughter-in-law called to tell me her friend was hysterical – as in emotional instability caused by trauma – because there was no more pepper spray to buy. How can people live in such a state of panic? The truth is they cannot.

My grandson saw a video clip of news from Israel in his school. He immediately texted his dad: "Are all the Jews in Israel going to die?" Dad emailed back,

> *The world seems to have a blind spot when it comes to Israel and the Jews*

"Not to worry. We have a state and an army. They will protect us." But no one can be protected from these random acts of murder. It is this randomness that so infuriates and terrifies. Added to all that is the fact that no one seems able or willing to do something about it. I don't know what – but something.

We cannot live in silence now. Maybe it is our task to get the word out about Israel. Perhaps it is our mission to tell all about her marvelous accomplishments, to remind everyone that there may be errors and even human rights violations, but Israel is not focused on destroying a people. Israel is not genocidal. It is not declaring the death of all Palestinians, nor will it allow the death of all Israelis.

There are solutions to accommodate both peoples in this vast territory called the Middle East. We, who for whatever reasons don't live in Israel, must join the battle somehow. We can be the mouthpieces for our families in Israel. We can talk to the world.

In the face of our friends' and neighbours' disdain or disbelief, we must persist in telling the truth about Israel. I do not mean that we must be defensive or apologetic. Rather, the truth can be shared even in the face of our neighbours' lack of trust or the media's open biases. Even if it is uncomfortable, we can be Israel's voice to the world. Moral indignation is ours now.

For too long they have spoken only ill of Israel, for too long they have believed only the bad. Now it is our job to set the record straight. Speak up and share the responsibility for Israel's survival. ■

News

Jewish candidates: Who won and who lost?

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

There were three Jewish MPs before the Oct. 19 election, but by the end of the next day, there were six, all of them Liberal and all of them new to the House of Commons.

Canada's first-ever Jewish finance minister, Joe Oliver, was defeated in his Toronto riding, as was Tory MP Mark Adler, while Irwin Cotler didn't seek re-election in Mount Royal.

Beating Adler in York Centre was Liberal Michael Levitt, while Cote St. Luc Mayor Anthony Housefather bested Tory Robert Libman in Mount Royal, Liberal Jim Carr prevailed over Conservative MP Joyce Bateman in Winnipeg South Centre, Karina Gould in Burlington, Julie Dabrusin in Toronto-Danforth and in Quebec's Laurentides–Labelle riding, David Graham took the seat for the Liberals.

With 20,282 votes (32 per cent), Graham defeated Bloc Québécois candidate Johanne Régimbald (18,807, 30 per cent) and NDPer Simon-Pierre Landry (16,624, 26 per cent). NDP MP Marc-André Morin had held the riding since 2011, but he lost the nomination to Landry.

"I very much appreciate the support of the voters of the riding where I grew up," Graham told *The CJN*. "I worked very hard, knocking on thousands of doors and attending hundreds of events across the riding, which, at 19,634 square km is almost identical in territory to Israel (20,770 square km). I believe the Laurentians were ready for a real change, and I am proud to be delivering it for my community."

It was first time running for political office for Graham, whose is Jewish from his mother's side. His grandparents were Beno Eskenazi, a Sephardi immigrant from Istanbul and a successful Montreal civil engineer, and Goldie Wolofsky, granddaughter of *Kanader Adler* newspaper founder Hirsch Wolofsky. His father's family is a mix of Catholic and Protestant.

Meanwhile, in an upset, Julie Dabrusin beat NDP incumbent Craig Scott in former NDP leader Jack Layton's riding of Toronto-Danforth by a 1,200-vote margin.

Oliver lost the hotly contested riding of Eglinton-Lawrence, which he'd held since 2011, when he beat incumbent Liberal cabinet minister Joe Volpe. Jews comprise just under a quarter of the riding.

With 39 per cent of the votes, Oliver was defeated by Liberal candidate and lawyer Marco Mendicino, who won 50 per cent.

They were trailed by former Saskatchewan NDP finance minister Andrew Thomson, who garnered six per cent.

In Toronto's York Centre, where three Jews went head to head as the top contenders, Levitt won the historically Liberal riding back for his party, beating the incumbent Adler, who served one term and garnered attention during the election campaign for (falsely) claiming in some of his campaign signage to be the first-ever MP who was the child of a Holocaust survivor.

The race was close, with Levitt grabbing 47 per cent of the vote and Adler getting 44 per cent. Palliative care doctor Hal Berman came in third for the NDP, with seven per cent.

Michael Levitt

In Montreal's high-profile Mount Royal, a Liberal riding for 75 years that the Tories had hoped to capture after whittling away at Cotler's margin of victory over the past two elections, Housefather won handily with about 50 per cent of the vote, to Libman's 38 per cent.

In Burlington, Gould, 28, beat three-term Conservative MP Mike Wallace, garnering 32,228 votes (46 per cent) to his 29,778 (42.5 per cent).

In Toronto-St. Paul's, which is also home to many Jews, longtime Liberal incumbent Carolyn Bennett won by a landslide, followed by Conservative Marnie MacDougall. First-time candidate Noah Richler, son of famous Jewish novelist Mordecai Richler, came third for the NDP.

In Thornhill, NDP candidate Lorne Cherry lost to incumbent Tory MP Peter Kent, who held onto the riding easily.

Out west, in British Columbia, first-time NDP candidate Mira Oreck, formerly Pacific region director of Canadian Jewish Congress and current director of public engagement at the Broadbent Institute, was defeated in the newly created riding of Vancouver-Granville.

Despite the fact Leadnow, a group advocating for strategic voting among Liberal and NDP supporters, endorsed Oreck, she came in third with 10,394 votes, losing to Liberal Jody Wilson-Raybould, former regional chief of the Assembly of First Nations, and trailing Conservative Erinn Broshko, a corporate lawyer and businessman.

As expected, NDP leader Tom Mulcair beat Liberal candidate and lawyer Rachel Bendayan in the Montreal riding of Outremont, but the race was surprisingly close, with Bendayan getting 34 per cent of the votes to Mulcair's 44 per cent.

In Alberta, former MLA, city councillor and 2013 mayoral candidate Karen Leibovici lost for the Liberals in the re-formed riding of Edmonton West, which historically had gone back and forth between the Liberals and the Tories, and was last held by former Liberal cabinet minister Anne McLellan. It was won by Tory Kelly McCauley.

In Winnipeg South Centre, Liberal Jim Carr, a former newspaper columnist and president of the Manitoba Business Council, as well as a vocal supporter of Israel, defeated Tory incumbent Joyce Bateman.

In Ontario, Tory Yonatan Rozenszajn, a 31-year-old lawyer who immigrated to Canada from Israel in 1999, came a distant third in Hamilton Centre, with almost 6,000 votes. Incumbent and former provincial cabinet minister David Christopherson won the riding for the NDP. Liberal Anne Tennier came second, with close to 14,000 votes. ■

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Jewish groups extend warm congratulations to Trudeau

SHERI SHEFA
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Jewish community groups say they hope to establish a positive relationship with Justin Trudeau's new Liberal government.

After winning a majority with 184 seats, Trudeau, speaking at a victory rally in Montreal on election night, promised to "be the prime minister of all Canadians."

David J. Cape, chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), thanked outgoing Prime Minister Stephen Harper for his leadership and support of Israel, but congratulated Trudeau on his definitive win.

"We are grateful for the positions Mr. Trudeau and his party have taken on a number of issues, including support for hate crimes legislation; sanctions against Iran; a range of social justice challenges; and a close Canada-Israel relationship – to name only a few," Cape said. "We look forward to working with Prime Minister-elect Trudeau and his cabinet, along with the opposition parties, on the range of public policy issues of importance to the Jewish community and indeed all Canadians."

Michael Mostyn, CEO of B'nai Brith Canada also congratulated Trudeau. "As the voice of grassroots Canadian Jewry, we look forward to working with the new government on issues of importance to the Jewish community. Our 2015 IMPACT Survey identified many of the community's top issues and will inform the advocacy agenda that B'nai Brith will bring forward to Canada's new government," he said. "At the same time, we want to thank outgoing Prime Minister Stephen Harper for his service to Canada which was characterized by his long-standing commitment to the safety and security of Canadians and his principled support of the democratic State of Israel both in Canada and at international fora."

Ispace Canada, a "progressive pro-peace organization," said the election showed you "can't stereotype or pigeonhole the Jewish community. The results in the five ridings with large numbers of Jewish voters showed that there is a return to the progressive orientation of Jews in Canada. In the 2011 election, 52 per cent of the Jewish community supported the Conservatives. This time there was a definitive shift," they said.

"Of course Israel remains a serious consideration for Jews in Canada, but as *The Canadian Jewish News* demonstrated in a pre-election article, the policies concerned with Israel and the Middle East are almost identical in all three major parties. However, only one party used Israel as a wedge issue, creating a rift in the community.

David Cape

"This election has created somewhat of a dilemma for the organized Jewish community. Some groups have put all their political capital behind the Conservative party. Now they will have to figure out how to represent the diversity of Jewish opinion to the newly elected government."

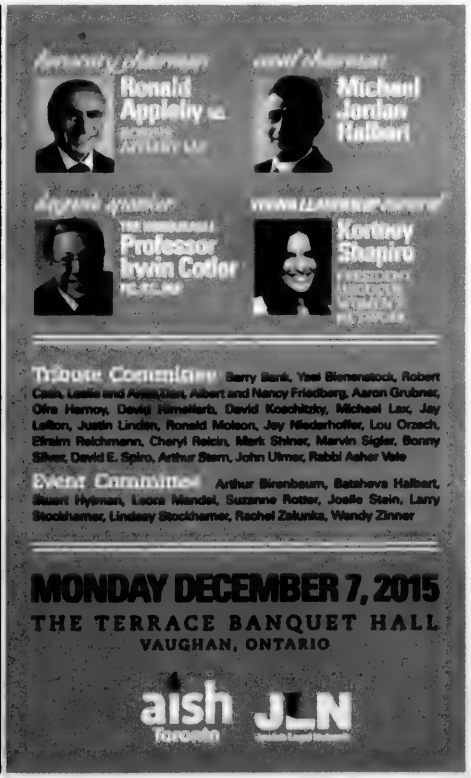
Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC) president and CEO Avi Benlolo released a statement congratulating the 43-year-old Trudeau.

"FSWC looks forward to working with Mr. Trudeau and the Liberal party as we continue our efforts to promote tolerance education and eradicate hate and anti-Semitism in Canadian society," Benlolo said.

"I am eager to speak with Mr. Trudeau and Liberal MPs in the coming months about how we can best work together to achieve these common goals," he said, adding that he is grateful for Harper's "relentless effort over this past decade to combat anti-Semitism, promote Holocaust education and defend the State of Israel. We have every confidence that Mr. Trudeau will continue this important effort."

Meryle Kates, executive director of StandWithUs, an Israel advocacy group, said although her organization is apolitical, she hopes for continued support for Israel from the government. "We've enjoyed a very enviable relationship between Israel and our government leaders in Canada, and I would hope that that relationship will continue with the newly elected government."

Mark Waldman, executive director of the non-partisan Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC), also congratulated Trudeau. "We look forward to building on the solid foundation that he has built with our community over the past few years. We thank Prime Minister Stephen Harper for his steadfast support of our community and the issues that we hold dear. We would also like to express our appreciation to [NDP Leader] Tom Mulcair for his support and friendship." ■



GUEST VOICE

Losing Harper will not be an easy pill to swallow

Michael Diamond

More than a decade ago, I asked a number of senior Conservatives why they were prepared to take such a strong stand on Israel. Would that not weaken the party and make it less likely to win an election? The answer I received was simple: we will do it because it is the right thing to do, and Canadians will "get it."

The Conservative party did just that, and Canadians did get it.

Many of us were truly saddened on election night. We were saddened because Stephen Harper led a government that, more than any other, was prepared to take strong stands in support of western values, and of Israel. Harper and the Conservative party raised the bar in Canada in many ways, including the importance of supporting the only democracy in the Middle East in unequivocal terms. Losing Harper's leadership in this area will not be an easy pill to swallow.

Now, Justin Trudeau is set to become Canada's next prime minister. He was not my choice, but he is Canada's choice, and he has won the respect that the position deserves, including from those who did not support him. I believe it is our job not to undermine him and his party, but to carry on in good faith and assume that the assurances and commitments made during the election will be kept.

Trudeau talks about a Canada for all Canadians. How he interprets that, given the diversity of our country's population, will be the challenge.

When Palestinians knife Jews in Israel, how will he handle the controversy? Will he rise to the level of Harper in declaring clearly that Canada stands with Israel in its attempts to repel the terrorists? Will he suggest there is moral equivalency between the positions of the Palestinians and the Israeli Jews, between the attackers and the attacked? Or will he just stay quiet on the subject?

Israel could, until today, count on Canada's prime minister, or one of his senior staff, for support – not military support, but the support of words of truth. It's the kind of support that matters to Israelis who feel alone in the world, and that allows other world leaders to take more supportive stands on Israel. Perhaps Israel still can turn to Canada's next prime minister.

> *He was not my choice, but he is Canada's choice.*

Throughout the campaign, people like myself raised serious concerns about the willingness of Trudeau to be as supportive of Israel as Harper had been. Yet, privately and publicly, the Jewish community was treated to assurances that there was no daylight between the Liberals and Conservatives on the question of support for Israel. Many in our community believed these words, and many traditional Liberals who had moved into the Conservative fold returned to vote Liberal, believing that Trudeau would be for Israel what Harper had been. That was their choice to make, and they made it.

The core message of the Liberals was that it's time for change. The question now is what form that change will take, and whether we as Canadians, and as members of the Jewish community of Canada, will benefit from those changes.

Being an optimist by nature, I am prepared to wait and see, and trust in what I have been told by prominent and not-so-prominent Liberals alike – that Trudeau would be a friend of Israel and of the Jewish community.

Democracy may not be perfect, but it's the best political system available, and in our willingness to accept the outcome, and not prejudge, we strengthen that system and our country. Make no mistake: I, like many, will be watching carefully and am willing to be critical if and when appropriate. But I will be positive, too, where positives are due. That's the democratic way. ■

Michael Diamond is a business consultant, entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist. He is involved extensively in Jewish and non-Jewish community life and sits on or chairs several boards and committees of a number of non-profit organizations.

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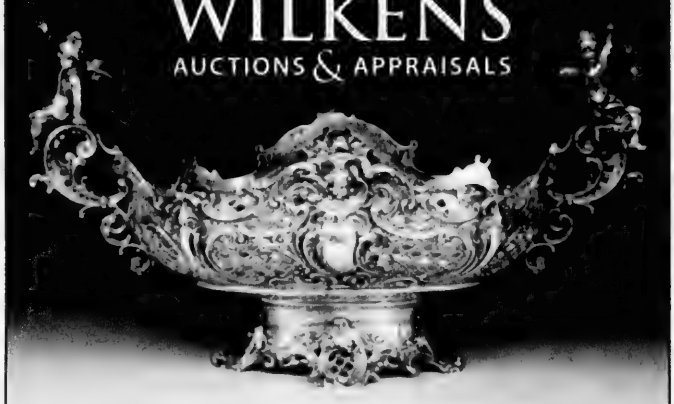

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GUEST VOICE

After the election, a new day for the Jewish community

Benjamin Shinewald

The Canadian Jewish community has been largely disconnected from reality these past 10 years. The Liberals' stunning electoral victory offers us a precious chance to reconcile with ourselves, and with that reality.

The Conservatives' muscular pro-Israel rhetoric has long resonated with many Canadian Jews and brought them into Stephen Harper's political base. This is perfectly fine, of course, but what is worrying is that the silencing of disagreements and control of messaging have percolated into our communal life.

You would think that a community that virtually invented the concept of dissent would have celebrated our differences and fostered a deep sense of mutual respect across party lines. Instead, at some point in the last decade, a clear sense began to emerge that the Conservatives were the only "legitimate" choice for Canada's Jews.

Jewish fundraising organizations tripped over themselves to bestow all manner of awards on Harper and other Conservative stalwarts, such as Jason Kenney, while prominent Jewish advocacy organizations shifted evermore right, blurring the line between communal interests and partisanship. Little by little, communal dissent dissipated. Mutual respect fell into short supply.

All this pushed Jewish Liberals back on their heels, their Jewish and Zionist bona fides sometimes even called into question. Some Jewish Liberals became almost apologetic and timid in the face of their Conservative co-religionists.

That reality began to change with the 2013 election of Justin Trudeau as the Liberal party's leader. Jews increasingly saw a leader who supported Israel just as robustly as Stephen Harper. A key moment happened in the campaign during the Munk Foreign Policy Debate, during which Trudeau asserted: "The issue of Israel where we most disagree as Liberals with Mr. Harper is that he has made support for Israel a domestic political football, when all three of us support Israel and any Canadian government will."

In failing to refute Trudeau's assertion, Harper effectively communicated that the Liberal party really did, in fact, have Israel's back. In one fell swoop, Trudeau neutralized 10 years of wedge politics, and Jews began paying greater attention to the Liberal leader and to the other issues at play in the campaign.

Those issues resonated strongly with many of us, although Conservative strategists continued to mistakenly believe that Jewish voters were single-issue voters. Instead, from the economy to the niqab, from Rob Ford to refugees, Jews increasingly found themselves questioning the Conservatives' judgment and bristling at their tone.

It is telling that two of the three Jews elected in 2011 were Conservatives, whereas the six Jews elected in 2015 are all Liberals. More telling still is that every "Jewish riding" in Canada save one went Liberal red, while Canada's most senior Jewish parliamentarian, Joe Oliver, lost his seat to Marco Mendicino, a Liberal newcomer who expressed his support for our community unambiguously, but also inclusively.

Today, with change so clearly in the air across Canada, we should all seize the opportunity enthusiastically to welcome its breezes into our Jewish community, too. To earn the trust of our community's grassroots, Jewish advocacy organizations should acknowledge the problems of the past and embrace real dissent. To earn the trust of our new government, they must commit to a truly non-partisan future.

Jewish Liberals, meanwhile, should avoid any temptation to settle scores with their Conservative counterparts. Instead, they should reach out to Jewish Conservatives in a spirit of unity and collaboration.

No matter which party you voted for, all of us in the Jewish community should recommit to the deeply Jewish concept of *derech eretz*, long absent from our communal debate, but central to who we are at our core. ■

Benjamin Shinewald lives in Toronto and serves on a variety of Jewish communal boards.

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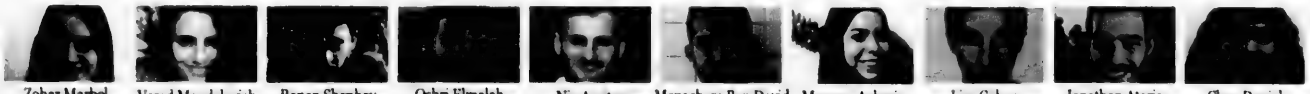

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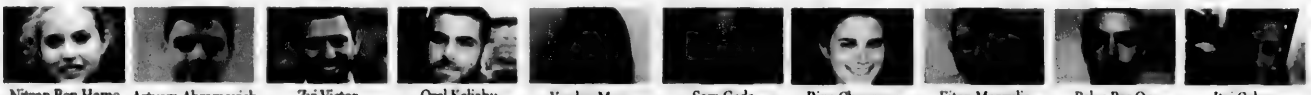

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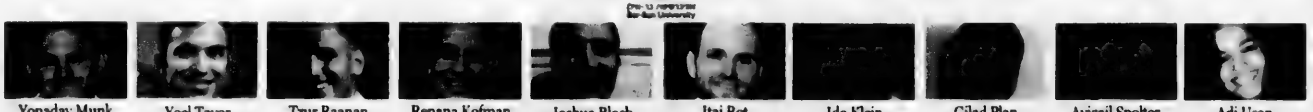

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Jim Carr reclaims Winnipeg South Centre for Liberals

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Jim Carr says he's ready.

Carr, a third-generation Winnipegger who often notes that his Russian Jewish grandparents came to Canada a century ago, took almost 60 per cent of the vote in Winnipeg South Centre Oct. 19, handily defeating incumbent Tory MP Joyce Bateman, who received about 30 per cent.

"The people of Canada have said that they are ready for change, the voters in Winnipeg South Centre have said that they are ready for change and I am ready to be the MP for Winnipeg South Centre," he said in his victory speech.

"What a victory this has been for Justin Trudeau and the Liberal party! The map of Canada is red, red, red! In just a few short years, Justin Trudeau has led us back from the wilderness to form a majority government, and he did it with a positive message of hope."

He said that under Trudeau's leadership, he's looking forward to the restoration of civil discourse and he predicted the new prime minister will re-institute regular meetings with the premiers.

Carr was a strong contender for the seat. He began his professional life as a musician, playing oboe for the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra before leaving for McGill University. Since returning to Winnipeg, Carr has worn many high-profile hats, among them being a lone Liberal member of the Manitoba legislature, editorial writer and columnist for the *Winnipeg Free Press*, spokesperson for the University of Winnipeg, and president and CEO of the Business Council of Manitoba.

Jim Carr speaks to supporters on election night. MYRON LOVE PHOTO

In 2011, Carr was awarded the Order of Manitoba, the province's highest honour for his contributions to his home community.

Coming from the West as one of three Jews in the Liberal caucus (as well as all of Parliament), and considering his credentials, Carr could be in line for a cabinet post in the new government. A reporter asked him if he expects that, and he responded that he harbours no such expectation. "My goal was to be elected the member of Parliament for Winnipeg South Centre," he said. "My focus will be serving my constituents."

In his victory speech, he also thanked his team of 400 volunteers, singling out one in particular – 85-year-old Janice Kaminsky – who, Carr said, put up 800 campaign signs during the campaign.

Carr said Winnipeg South Centre is a microcosm of Canada.

"Going door to door over the past two years, I have met people from all over the world – people like my grandparents who came here from Russia over 100 years ago, seeking a better life – and I have heard all of their stories. We are a generous nation with tolerance for all."

In recapturing Winnipeg South Centre, he has restored the Liberal brand to a constituency that had traditionally voted Liberal since its reconstitution in 1988. The riding – home to about 70 per cent of Winnipeg's Jewish population – was represented by former Liberal cabinet minister Lloyd Axworthy from 1988 to 2000.

Axworthy was foreign minister under former prime minister Jean Chrétien and later served as president and vice-chancellor of the University of Winnipeg.

Axworthy was succeeded by Anita Neville (who, like Carr, is Jewish). She served from 2000 to 2011 and was edged out in her bid for re-election by Bateman who won the seat by less than 1,000 votes.

In his remarks, Carr said Bateman called him and graciously conceded defeat. ■

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Liberals hold on to Mount Royal

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

In one of the most-watched races in the country, particularly for the Jewish community, Mount Royal was the riding the Conservatives had pinned their hopes on for making a breakthrough in Montreal.

But in the end, it wasn't even close.

Liberal Anthony Housefather decisively defeated Conservative Robert Libman maintaining a 75-history of Liberal hegemony in Mount Royal, the riding held by outgoing MP Irwin Cotler.

The other big story of the night was the strong showing by Liberal Rachel Bendayan against New Democratic leader Tom Mulcair in Outremont.

At just after 11 p.m. with half of the vote in his favour, Housefather delivered his victory speech to the jubilant crowd gathered at his Van Horne Avenue campaign office.

"Everyone tells me I have very large footsteps to follow: Pierre Trudeau, Sheila Finestone and Irwin Cotler for the past 16 years," said Housefather, referring to the last three MPs for Mount Royal. "I feel very lucky that Irwin will be around to advise me in the coming years."

Housefather, 45, mayor of Côte St. Luc for the past 10 years and a corporate lawyer, vowed to represent every constituent in this culturally diverse riding. With Jewish voters representing about one-third of the population, the remainder is made up of a wide spectrum of ethnic and religious groups – many of whom clearly backed Housefather.

"I have to represent all people in Mount Royal, and stand up for their rights as Canadians and, of course, human rights across the world... I hope to fulfil your faith in me, and I promise to work hard every single day to do just that."

Early returns indicated that Conservative took a majority of the polls in Côte St. Luc and Hampstead, where the Jewish population is concentrated, while the Liberals were leading by a wide margin elsewhere, in Côte des Neiges and Town of Mount Royal.

According to Elections Canada, the final tally was Housefather 50 per cent (more than 24,000 votes), Libman 38 per cent (more than 18,000 votes), and the NDP's Mario Jacinto Rimbao eight per cent. Twenty per cent of ballots were cast in advance polls.

"Eighteen thousand votes was the magic number we thought we needed to win – that's more than 2,000 votes than Irwin Cotler got when he won four years ago," said Libman. "Certainly, we had strong support in the Jewish community, but the red tide swept the rest of the riding, where the Trudeau name still has magic."

Libman added that, despite what some Liberal supporters claim, he did not take any personal shots at Cotler nor imply that he supported Harper, but simply quoted him and cited his record on where he, Cotler, disagreed with his leader, Trudeau, especially on combating ISIS and terrorism.

Libman wished Housefather well, but said, "We will be watching closely where Trudeau will lead the country in foreign affairs... I hope we are wrong. Time will tell."

Although the Conservatives – including Stephen Harper himself, who launched his campaign there on Aug. 2 –fought hard for Mount Royal, the Liberals were consistently ahead in the polls.

Cotler told *The CJN* he believes Housefather clinched it for four main reasons: "the rising boat effect," in other words, all Liberals benefited from leader Justin Trudeau's soaring popularity; the "antipathy" toward Harper, which he believes was strong, at least outside Côte St. Luc and Hampstead; the drop in NDP support, which was 18 per cent in the 2011 election; and Housefather was an "excellent" candidate.

He also said Libman's aggressive style was counterproductive. "I think people are tired of negative campaigning," said Cotler, who won Mount Royal in 2011 with a 42 per cent plurality when the turnout was 57 per cent. Turnout was about 70 per cent this time. Libman, 54, an architect by profession and former Côte St. Luc mayor and Equality Party member of the Quebec National Assembly, tried to make this a contest of who supports Israel more and who is tougher on terrorism.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

Anthony Housefather on election night. At left is outgoing MP Irwin Cotler.
JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

UJA Federation Announces Nominees

Toronto – Richard Venn, Nominating Committee Chair for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, has announced the nominees for the Board of Directors and Individual Representatives Council Members.

Elections will be held during UJA Federation's Annual Meeting on Thursday, December 10, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. at Lipa Green Centre for Jewish Community Services (4600 Bathurst Street, Toronto).

In accordance with the by-laws, the Federation's governance consists of a Council and a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors, the Chair and the Senior Vice-Chair will be elected by the Council Members. No nominations can be made from the floor during the Annual Meeting. However, any member of the Jewish community may be placed in nomination by complying with the following by-laws: In order to be elected or appointed and to continue as a Council Member, each individual must (a) be Jewish, reside in the Greater Toronto Area, and support the objects of the Corporation (b) have made a financial commitment to the United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto in respect of the most recent annual campaign and be in good standing with the United Jewish Appeal in respect of such commitment; and (c) shall not have refused to remove any barrier that is within his or her control that would prevent his or her spouse's religious re-marriage.

Each Individual Representative Council Member shall be elected at an Election Meeting by Community Individuals immediately preceding the Annual Meeting from among the qualified candidates duly nominated by the Nominating committee or nominated by any seven Community Individuals; provided that in respect of nominations made by Community Individuals: (a) No Community Individuals may nominate more than three nominees for election as Individual Council Member at any Election Meeting; (b) such nominations shall be in writing and accompanied by the written consent of the nominee; and (c) such nominations shall be delivered to the Corporation at least 21 days before the Election Meeting which the election is to occur.

Nominated for Chair of the Board is Morris Perlis and Senior Vice-Chair of the Board is Bruce Leboff. Nominees for the Board of Directors include:

For a two year term:
Cecil Brauer, Leslie Gales, Shel Geller, Lorne Goldstein, Yael Karol, Jodie Kaufman Davis, Keith Ray, and Carmela Serebryany-Harris.

For a one year term:
Ruth Ekstein, Warren Kimel, Shoel Silver, Felicia Posluns, and Honey Sherman.

Continuing their two year term:
Allan Brown, Michael Buckstein, Laurie Davis, Michael Diamond, Lisa Draper, David Dulberg, Paula Foster, Sarena Koschitzky, David Peltz, Wendy Posluns, Joel Reitman, Daniel Rethazy, Ariella Rohringer, Jason Rubinoff, and Richard Venn.

Honourary Directors:
Joseph Lebovic and Elizabeth Wolfe.

The following are to be elected for a two year term 2015-2017 as Individual Representative Council Members: Elena Aleinikov, Stephen Altbaum, Barbara Bank, Austin Beutel, Cecil Brauer, Michael Buckstein, Samuel Cohen, Sharon Cohen, Stephen Cole, Stephen Diamond, Sheldon Disenhouse, Lisa Draper, Wendy Eisen, Ruth Ekstein, David Engel, Judy Engel, Michael Florence, Leslie Gales, Leo Goldhar, David Green, Alison Himel, Yael Karol, Warren Kimel, Sarena Koschitzky, Menachem Kuhl, Bruce Leboff, Joseph Lebovic, Glennie Lindenberg, David Mansell, Ira Marder, Henry Morton, Karen Morton, Robert Palter, David Peltz , Sarah Perlis, Felicia Posluns, Keith Ray, Rochelle Reichert, Craig Rimer, Lionel Robins, Ariella Rohringer, Shael Rosenbaum, Jeff Rosenthal, Lori Rosenthal, Carmela Serebryany-Harris, Ralph Shedletsky, Honey Sherman, Randy Shiff, Moishe Sigler, Eileen Silver, Shoel Silver, Eric Slavens, David Spiro, Elaine Todres, Richard Venn, Dodi Weill, Alan Winer, Elizabeth Wolfe, Henry Wolfond, Rosanne Zarnett.

In addition to the Individual Council Members listed, each Community Group of the Federation shall be entitled to appoint (2) Individuals as Group Council Members. Any Community Group which has a membership in good standing in excess of 100 persons residing in the Greater Toronto Area shall be entitled to appoint one additional Group Council Member. According to the by-laws of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, organizations and associations may apply to become a Community Group by submitting an application that confirms that it subscribes to the objects of the UJA Federation, and promotes the United Jewish Appeal Annual Campaign. Applications for Community Group Membership were solicited via mail in August 2015. All Community Groups must be registered with UJA Federation by October 26, 2015.

UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

TAKE NOTICE

Lipa Green Centre

December 10, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

DATED

BY ORDER OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Finance Minister Joe Oliver a casualty of Liberal sweep

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Joe Oliver, left, lost his seat. TWITTER PHOTO

Conservative MPs in Jewish-populated ridings in Toronto were caught up in the red tide that vaulted the Liberal Party to victory in the Oct. 19 general election, with Finance Minister Joe Oliver the most prominent casualty.

Oliver and York Centre MP Mark Adler lost the seats they won in the 2011 election to Liberals Marco Mendocino and Michael Levitt, respectively. MP Peter Kent retained the Tory seat in Thornhill, just north of Toronto.

Eglinton-Lawrence and York Centre had been longstanding Liberal strongholds until the Tories' snatched them in the 2011 election, which returned a Conservative majority.

Oliver's defeat had to be considered the biggest upset. A high-profile cabinet minister largely responsible for steering the economy through difficult economic times, he had also been at the forefront of trumpeting the Tories' strong support for Israel "through fire and water."

Liberal and NDP candidates in both ridings, along with the party leaders, attempted to undercut that Conservative theme by voicing their own strong support for Israel.

According to an online poll conducted by *The CJN* about three weeks before the election, 44 per cent of our readers supported Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservatives. To what extent that issue played a part in the final results is unclear this early after the election, but it likely played a role in some Jewish voters' decisions in the three Toronto-area ridings, each of which count substantial Jewish populations.

According to Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), Thornhill is home to 45,715 people who identify themselves as Jewish, or 33 per cent of the population.

The numbers are less, but still substantial in the two Toronto ridings. According to the same NHS findings, 24,405 people identify themselves as Jewish in Eglinton-Lawrence, which is about 22 per cent of the population, while 21,310 residents identify themselves as Jewish in York Centre, or about 18 per cent of the population.

The final tally in Eglinton-Lawrence showed that Mendocino, a former federal prosecutor, received 27,494 votes, or 50 per cent of those cast, to Oliver's 21,601, or 39 per cent. New Democrat Andrew Thomson trailed with six per cent of the vote.

In 2011, Oliver grabbed the riding from longstanding Liberal MP Joe Volpe with 22,633 votes (46.8 per cent) to 18,597 (38.5 per cent) for the Grits. In back-to-back elections, Oliver decreased his votes by about 1,000, while Mendocino grew the Liberal total by around 9,000.

Levitt re-captured York Centre for the Liberals with 20,109 votes (46.8 per cent) to Adler's 18,893 (44 per cent). Hal Berman of the NDP received 3,148 votes (7.3 per cent).

In 2011, Adler took York Centre for the Tories for the first time since 1962, after receiving 20,355 votes (48.5 per cent) to incumbent MP Ken Dryden's 13,979 votes (33.3 per cent).

From 2011 to 2015, Adler's tally dropped by nearly 1,500 votes, while the Liberals increased their total by around 6,000 votes.

Speaking a couple of days after the returns were in, Levitt was savouring his victory and looking forward to getting to work in Ottawa. "It's definitely been an exciting time," he said. "It's just a fantastic feeling."

Levitt attributed his win to the voters' appetite for change after 10 years of the Harper government. The Liberal platform on the economy, refugees and social policy resonated with voters, as did the party's clear statement of support of Israel and its opposition to the BDS movement.

In winning York Centre, Levitt was returning the riding to the Liberal fold. Prior to Adler's 2011 victory, it had been represented since 1962 by Liberals James Walker, Bob Kaplan, Art Eggleton and Dryden.

One Conservative MP who bucked the Liberal trend was former newsman Peter Kent. The incumbent representative for Thornhill, Kent received 31,911 votes (58.6 per cent) to Liberal Nancy Coldham's 18,385 (33.7 per cent). New Democrat Lorne Cherry received 2,820 votes (5.2 per cent).

Despite Kent's comfortable win, the margin of victory narrowed from 2011 to 2015. Four years ago, Kent took Thornhill with 36,629 votes (61.4 per cent) over Karen Mock of the Liberals, who received 14,125 votes (23.7 per cent).

The riding, which was created in 1997 from parts of Markham-Whitchurch-Stouffville and York North, had been held by Liberals Elinor Kaplan and Susan Kadis prior to Kent's first victory in 2008. ■

CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK

What does the Liberal win mean for Jewish groups?

Daniel Wolgelerenter

The longest election campaign in modern Canadian history delivered more than a surprise Liberal majority – it yielded six new Jewish MPs for the winning party: Michael Levitt in Toronto's York Centre; Anthony Housefather in Mount Royal, and Jim Carr in Winnipeg South Centre – all ridings with large Jewish populations – as well as Julie Dabrusin in Toronto-Danforth, Karina Gould in Burlington, Ont., and David Graham in Quebec's Laurentides–Labelle riding.

The election also saw the defeat of Stephen Harper, Canada's most vocally pro-Israel prime minister ever, as well as a loss by Joe Oliver, Canada's first Jewish finance minister, and the retirement of respected Mount Royal Liberal MP Irwin Cotler.

The campaign was perhaps the most divisive one ever for the Jewish community. Reminiscent of the U.S. right's disdain for President Barack Obama, some of Harper's Jewish supporters were especially vocal – both on social media and in more traditional channels – in wildly accusing Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau of, in effect, being a front for radical Islam.

By the end, there was pushback from a number of Jewish commentators, who noted that all three major parties voiced strong support for Israel and condemned the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement.

Did this motivate some Jewish voters to shift allegiances back to the Liberals, the community's historical home, after exit polls registered 52 per cent support among Jews for the Tories in 2011?

Conservative commentator Michael Diamond and the progressive Jewish group JSpace probably don't agree on much, but they both contend that Liberal wins in some of the "Jewish" ridings signalled that there was a shift among Jews toward the Liberals. As JSpace said in a statement, it "showed that there is a return to the progressive orientation of Jews in Canada," or as Diamond writes in this week's *CJN*, "many traditional Liberals who had moved into the Conservative fold returned to vote Liberal, believing that Trudeau would be for Israel what Harper had been."

However, there are no hard numbers yet – in the form of exit polling or riding return breakdowns – to support this contention. In fact, anecdotal evidence might suggest otherwise.

For instance, in the country's most "Jewish" riding, Thornhill, Conservative Peter Kent was re-elected with nearly 60 per cent of the vote, down only three percentage points from 2011 (albeit with a lower vote tally). And in Eglinton-Lawrence and York Centre, respectively, defeated Tories Oliver and Mark Adler each only lost about 1,500 votes compared to 2011, though voter turnout was higher in both ridings.

So it appears the Jewish vote for the Tories was again quite strong.

This raises another question: what do the election results mean for the community's relations with the new government?

While mainstream Jewish advocacy groups are all nominally non-partisan, they've all been very supportive of Harper and Conservative policies over the years, particularly on Israel.

Nevertheless, while also thanking Harper for his support for Israel and the Jewish community, they all warmly congratulated Trudeau on his victory last week and said they looked forward to working with him.

No doubt Trudeau and his team will, and should, take them at their word.

But after a decade of sometimes appearing to cozy up to the Liberals' political rivals, could these groups have trouble working with the new government?

That was the point JSpace tried to make when it said the election "created somewhat of a dilemma for the organized Jewish community. Some groups have put all their political capital behind the Conservative party. Now they will have to figure out how to represent the diversity of Jewish opinion to the newly elected government."

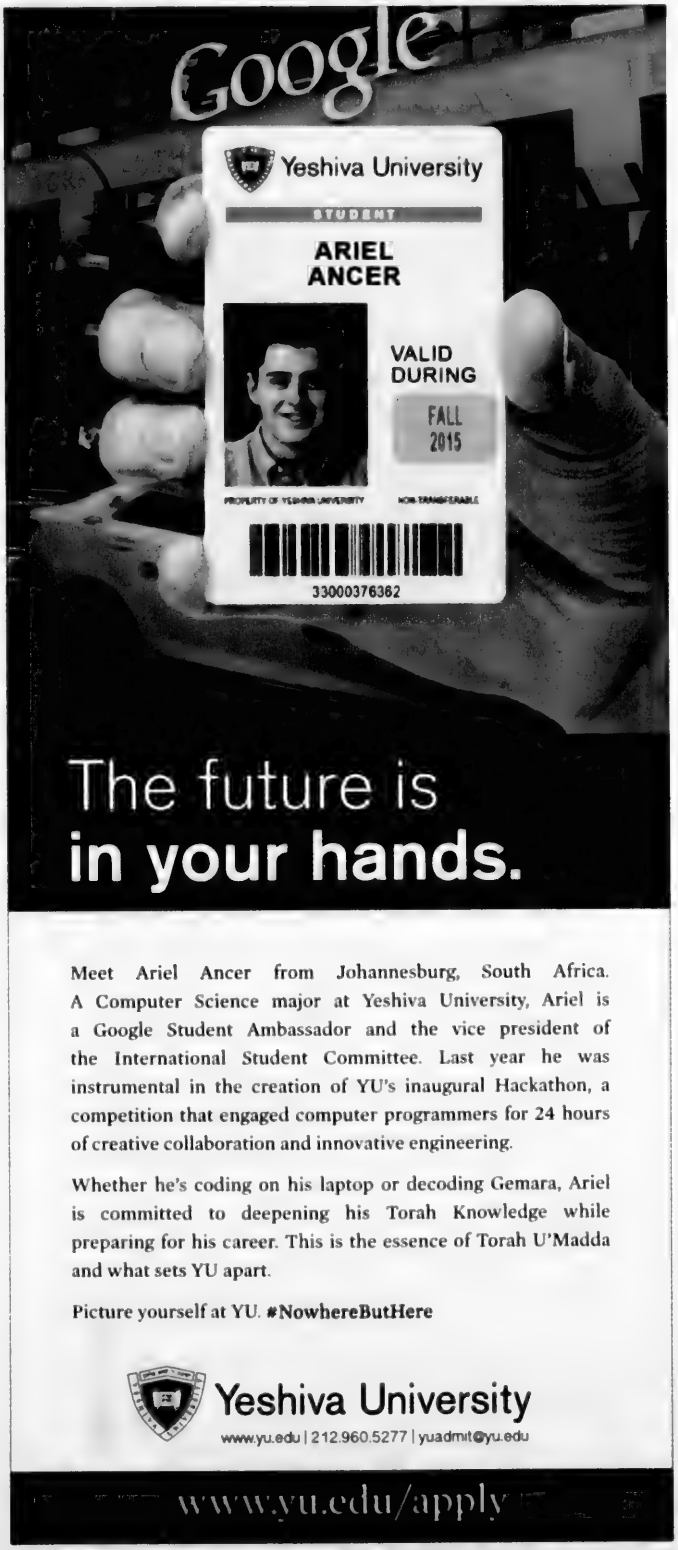
That sentiment cuts both ways, however, since Jews once again appear to have given Harper and the Tories a fair amount of support, so their views will need to be taken into account by mainstream Jewish groups as they interact with the new government.

How they'll try to meet that challenge and what kind of balance they'll need, or be able, to strike are open questions.

It won't necessarily be easy, though Jews and Jewish groups have historically had deep ties to the Liberal party, so they won't be starting from zero.

But it wouldn't be surprising if the Liberals were wary of the organized Jewish community, despite having courted Jews during the campaign with assurances about Israel and the BDS movement.

If that's the case, those six new Jewish Liberal MPs could come in handy quite quickly. ■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Advertising Feature

Winning a Spiritual War Takes Spirit

Dr. Michael Laitman
Professor of Ontology

What do you call a crazed Palestinian man—who until that moment was working alongside Israeli Jews for an Israeli phone company—deliberately driving his car into a bus stop, running over the pedestrians, then stepping out of his car and **frantically stabbing** these same people (caution: graphic images, viewer discretion is strongly advised)? What do you call two Palestinian children, ages 13 and 15, **stabbing Jews**, one of whom is their age (13), just because they're Jewish? Are they accountable for their actions? What does it take to turn children into coldblooded assassins? How do you define a situation where such madness happens all over Israel, multiple times a day? And finally, what does it make you think when global media, fully aware of the situation, almost completely ignore it, at best, or present terrorists as innocent Palestinians civilians killed for no reason by Israeli security forces? How does this compare to the reaction of global media when the organization Price Tag committed a **terror attack** against a Palestinian family?

As an Israeli, it is hard to speak of responsibility when emotions of terror and vengeance permeate every sensible corner still left in our minds. But precisely because I am so concerned for our people, I must look beyond the pain and describe what I see as our only way out. As a Jew who's lost almost his entire family in the Holocaust, and who's lived in Israel through wars and terror attacks, I feel compelled to speak out and not let the instinct of retribution take over.

The war we are at with the Arab world is not about territory. It is over a spiritual, universal task that we, Jews, must carry out. Before the establishment of the state of Israel, two great leaders, whose wisdom is now growing more evident than ever, predicted the current battle, and presented its solution. They knew that if we did not implement it we would find ourselves in deep trouble.

In one of his letters, the Rav Kook wrote, "Every global turmoil comes essentially for Israel. We are called upon for a great and sacred duty, which we are to fulfill willingly and mindfully—to build ourselves and the entire ruined world along with us."

In his book, *Ain Ayah*, Rav Kook elaborated on our duty: "When Israel arise … to give the entire world a new, corrected form [of brotherly love], not only Israel will rise, but the entire world. …At that time a new era will begin, without the filth of evil. Wickedness and uprising will be gone altogether, anger and sadness will not reign, and concern for the world's balance will be unheard of. At that time violence will disappear, and the sword will lose its prominence and will be utterly condemned."

A contemporary of Rav Kook was another great man who was troubled by the nation's fate. Most of the time, he was busy writing his commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, which is now regarded as the most elaborate and accurate commentary ever put on paper. But Rav Yehuda Ashlag—now known as Baal HaSulam, after his *Sulam* (ladder) commentary— also wrote extensively about the fate of the Jewish people and how we can establish a sustainable and thriving country.

In his essay, "Mutual Guarantee," Baal HaSulam stated, "It is incumbent upon the Israeli nation … to qualify itself and the entire world to take upon itself the sublime work of love of others." Later in the article he added, "The Israeli nation was established as a conduit through which sparks of purification will flow on to the entire human race throughout the world."

When Baal HaSulam completed his *Sulam* commentary, he celebrated the occasion with his students at a very symbolic location: Idra Zuta, the cave where Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and his disciples wrote *The Zohar*. But what concerned Baal HaSulam was not the tremendous feat he had achieved. He was preoccupied with the future of the state of Israel. He said that we have been given the land, but "we have not received the land into our hands." What he meant was that we have not begun to carry out the task for which we were given the land—uniting ourselves and projecting that unity to the world, as described above.

Moreover, Baal HaSulam chose to end his introduction to *The Zohar* with a stark warning, detailed over several pages, that Israel must be a role model to the world, or the horrors of the Holocaust will repeat themselves.

I wish it were easier, but the world will not leave us in peace until we muster the courage to unite, truly, regardless of circumstances, but sincerely from the bottom of our hearts. These two great men have given us this message to encourage us to do just that. They knew that Israel's wars are not won with arms, but with spirits. If we embrace the spirit of our nation—the spirit of "love your neighbor as yourself," and "that which you hate do not do unto others"—we will be the strongest nation on earth. Not because we will defeat our enemies, but because we won't have any.

I call upon all Jews whose heart is aching at the state of our nation to unite "as one man with one heart." Let us show the world a model of unity that all of humanity can and wants to embrace. If we unite, the world will see the light at the end of the tunnel of hatred into which we have stumbled, and we will emerge into a bright and promising tomorrow.

Follow Dr. Michael Laitman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/laitman

NDP Leader Mulcair gets scare from Liberal Bendayan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

He went increasingly on the attack as the campaign drew to a close. In his advertising in the final days of the campaign, he attacked Housefather for continuing to take his mayor's salary, saying Mount Royal residents deserve an MP with "integrity." He also called Housefather "a partner" of Liberal candidates who are "vocal critics of Israel," namely, Omar Alghraba in Mississauga, a former MP and past president of the Canadian Arab Federation who was elected Oct. 19 in Mississauga Centre, and retired general Andrew Leslie, who won in the Ottawa-area riding of Orléans.

Earlier, Libman attempted to demonstrate that Cotler was in line with the Harper government on Canada's participation in the military mission against the Islamic State and on foreign policy generally, something Cotler vigorously refuted.

This *CJN* reporter received a hostile reception at Libman's campaign office a couple of hours before the polls closed. Mount Royal Conservative Association president Jocelyn Allard physically pushed the reporter out, saying the office was a private place and that the reporter was not invited, and he didn't allow the reporter to speak to Libman.

Libman phoned an hour later to apologize, saying "the manner in which [Allard] spoke to you was completely unacceptable."

In Outremont, an upbeat Bendayan conceded defeat to her team crammed into her headquarters at 12:15 a.m., when she was trailing Mulcair with 33 per cent of the vote to his 42 per cent.

"This is very emotional for me, but not because of the numbers," said the 35-year-old lawyer. "Nobody thought 78 days ago that we had a chance. We gave him [Mulcair] a run for his money. People told me on the street today that they are excited by the vote, that it gave them a message of hope, for a better government."

Bendayan said she remains "there for the party," an apparent allusion to the possibility Mulcair, having led the NDP back to third-party status, will resign. Polls had her catching up and even surpassing the NDP leader in the last week of the campaign.

Bendayan, who is Sephardi and the daughter of Moroccan immigrants, has been active with the Liberals for a dozen years and served on its national executive.

She has been one of the hardest-working candidates, unofficially launching her campaign more than 1-1/2 years ago and, since January when she took a leave of absence from her law firm, stumping full out.

She said she knocked on more than 10,000 doors in Outremont, a sprawling riding that extends well beyond the borough of that name. Mulcair, who has held the riding since 2007, won with 55 per cent of the vote. Previously, Outremont had been Liberal since 1935, except during the Mulroney Progressive Conservative years from 1988 to 1993. Forty-two per cent of residents have French as a mother tongue, and it's home to many different cultural communities.

Rachel Bendayan

One of the most significant are the Chassidim. One of its leaders and a veteran political observer, Alex Werzberger, said he believed the great majority of Chassidim voted Liberal, with a few staying loyal to the Conservatives. The NDP, he said, never enjoyed support in the community.

That switch to the Liberals owes much to Bendayan's determined outreach over a long period. "She's very presentable. She did a lot of legwork, [and] eventually she cracked through the ice," he said.

Two other Sephardi women candidates were defeated: Conservative Valérie Assouline in Pierrefonds-Dollard finished a distant second on the West Island, where the NDP incumbent Lysane Blanchette Lamothe was ousted by Liberal Frank Baylis. Pascale Déry, a former French-language TV journalist considered a star candidate by the Conservatives, finished fourth in semi-rural Drummond, northeast of Montreal. She had unsuccessfully challenged Libman for the Conservative nomination in Mount Royal.

The wariness about Trudeau and the Liberals on Israel is still prevalent among some Jewish Montrealers. On election day, *The CJN* was emailed by Edmond Silber a video entitled "The Truth About Justin Trudeau and the Liberals." It concludes "Justin Trudeau is dangerous."

It implies Trudeau is sympathetic to Islamic radicals, showing him speaking at a conference in 2012, allegedly funded by IFRAN, a group linked to Hamas, and praying at a Montreal mosque that year that the video alleges is suspected of being a site for Al Qaeda recruitment. It also says his brother, documentary filmmaker Alexandre Trudeau, is biased against Israel. ■

Publication prompts unease over its anti-Jewish articles

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Your Ward News, a newsletter that openly espouses its admiration for Adolf Hitler, is expanding its presence in Thorncliffe Park, a Toronto neighbourhood with a heavy Muslim presence.

In its most recent edition, distributed about three weeks ago, editor-in-chief James Sears addresses "our Muslim brothers and sisters" under the headline, "Thorncliffe Park jihad against pedophilia; child grooming Marxist exit stage left!"

The 16-page publication features a front page with a pastiche of photos including Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and disgraced former deputy education minister Ben Levin, who are flanked by stone-throwers wearing keffiyahs and the Palestinian flag.

Inside the newsletter, there are Photoshopped images of Adolf Hitler, including one in which he's wearing a T-shirt decorated with the Palestinian flag; an article that says "acts of genocide and terror [are] perpetrated against Palestinians by blood-thirsty Zionist Talmudic Jews"; and a claim that today's Jews are descendants of Khazars, a Turkic tribe.

In a particularly disturbing illustration, the publication shows a photo of an infant dressed for Halloween wearing a Nazi uniform and a Hitler mustache.

The newsletter also promotes Sears' candidacy as an independent in the recently concluded national election. He received 254 votes in Beaches-East York.

Simon Rosenblum discovered the newsletter in his mail box a few weeks ago and found it unsettling. It is openly anti-Jewish, anti-gay and anti-left. It is clear in its admiration for Hitler and it is insulting in its characterization of high profile politicians, he said.

Rosenblum, past president of Canadian Friends of Peace Now Toronto, said he has brought his concerns to Canada Post, which he believes should not be delivering the newsletter.

Canada Post did not respond to *The CJN*'s request for a comment, but in May, when controversy over *Your Ward News* first surfaced, a spokesperson said it did not meet the standard for "non-mailable matter."

Rosenblum has also spoken to the staff of incoming area MP Rob Oliphant, hoping the new Liberal government will discuss the legalities of distributing the material with Canada Post. And he plans to bring his concerns to the attention of Jewish agencies charged with protecting the community.

***Your Ward News*, which claims a circulation of 77,000, is being delivered by Canada Post.**

> *It's the kind of stuff the Nazis were distributing.*

Avi Benlolo, CEO of Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, said he found the publication's content "quite disturbing."

He had brought the organization's concerns to the attention of the Toronto police hate crimes unit last May and planned to renew a request that it be investigated for its current content.

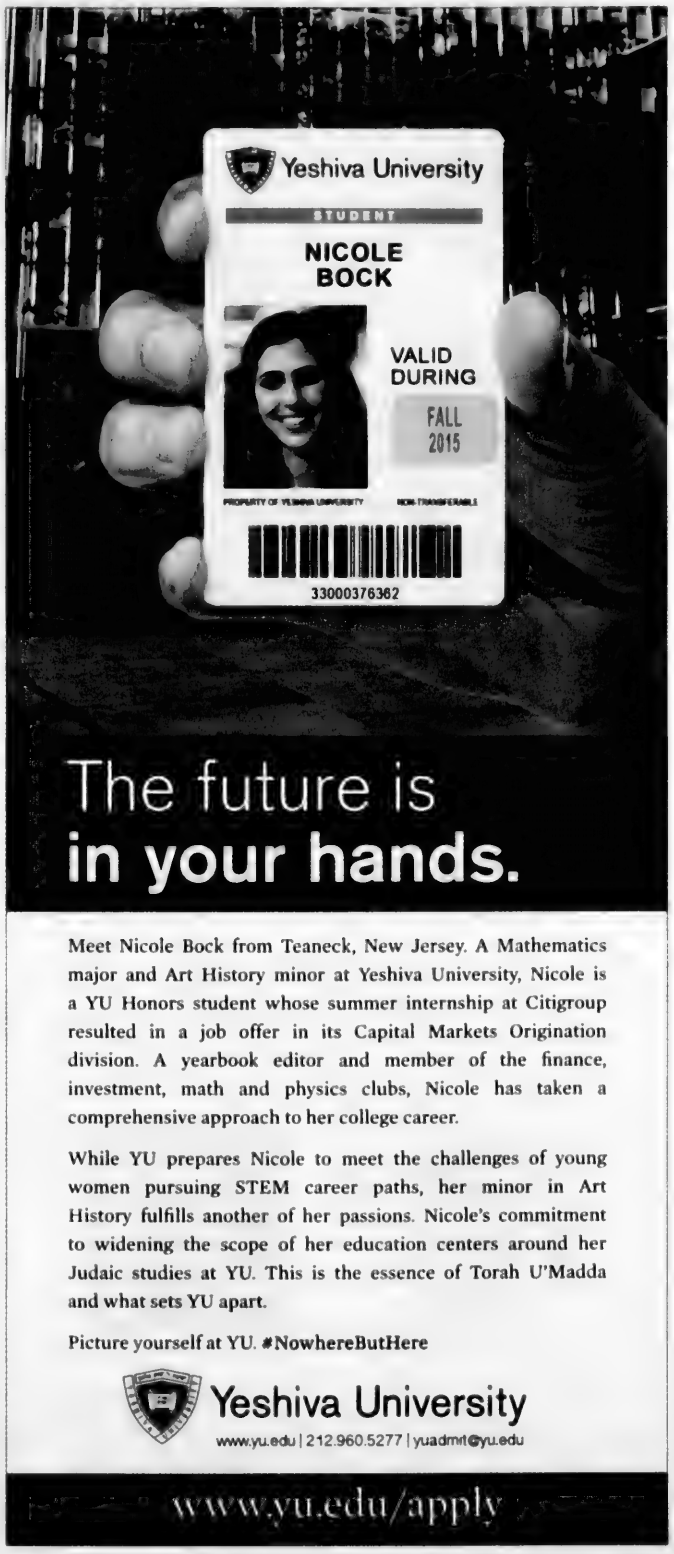
Sara Lefton, vice-president for Greater Toronto Area with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, echoed Benlolo's concerns.

"This is a disgusting publication that consistently disparages the Jewish People with crude caricatures and horrifically false accusations. We are dismayed that Canada Post continues to deliver this trash, and we have voiced our concern to them directly."

Rosenblum said receiving *Your Ward News* in his mail box made him feel "as if you lived in Germany in 1927. It's the kind of stuff the Nazis were distributing."

Rosenblum, who is retired, said *Your Ward News* boasts that it distributes 77,000 copies and is addressed to Muslims in Thorncliffe Park.

"When you live in an area that has an element within it that are not friendly to Jews and definitely hostile to Israel, you have people here who could be receptive to this message," he said. ■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Holocaust Education Week will focus on liberation

FRANCES KRAFT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Shael Rosenbaum and Marilyn Sinclair
MICHAEL RAJZMAN PHOTO

This year's Holocaust Education Week marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, a springboard for its theme, "Liberation: Aftermath and Rebirth."

The theme is "very complex," says Marilyn Sinclair, chair of the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre. "We would like to think of liberation as a singularly joyful event, but [survivors] had to face the reality that their families were murdered, their communities in ruins, and virtually everything they held dear to them was lost... So they had to set their minds to rebuilding their families, their lives, their homes and communities – most in far away places."

Toronto's 35th annual Holocaust Education Week (HEW) offers 162 programs, including lectures, cultural programs, workshops and survivor testimonies, held at synagogues, churches and other venues.

The event, which runs from Nov. 2 to 9, with some programs before and after, is considered the largest of its kind in the world, Sinclair said. But when it began, HEW, co-chaired this year by Dori Ekstein and Lily Kim, was "a little Jewish grassroots program," Sinclair noted. Last year, there were 32,000 attendees, with a similar number expected this year. The opening night program with historian David Eisenhower, grandson of former U.S. president Dwight Eisenhower, has created "a buzz in the community," Sinclair said. Eisenhower will discuss the liberation under his grandfather's command and its aftermath, at Adath Israel Congregation Nov. 2.

For Shael Rosenbaum, who takes over from Sinclair as the centre's chair next month, Eisenhower's talk has particular resonance. "He's a grandson of the liberator, and I'm a grandson of the liberated, so personally, it's very important to me," he said. Rosenbaum, who will be the first third-generation chair of the centre, said his generation knows that they are the last ones to learn about the Holocaust from first-hand testimonies. "It's really our obligation to learn about it," he said.

One of his goals as incoming chair is to get more young people involved.

Hearing survivor speakers is powerful, according to both Sinclair and Rosenbaum. Sinclair said her late father, Ernie Weiss, received a letter from a Muslim girl after he spoke at her school, telling him that boys who used to pull on her hijab and tease her started being nice to her after hearing him. Stories like that fuel Sinclair's optimism that Holocaust education is making a difference in the fight against racism and anti-Semitism.

One of the "highlight programs" of HEW is a symposium geared to young adults in their 20s and 30s, Rosenbaum said. The program, now in its sixth year, will be held Nov. 1 at Ryerson University's Oakham House (registration is at www.holocaustcentre.com/YPs). Among the speakers are Martin Maxwell, who is both a Holocaust survivor and a war veteran, and keynote speaker Tomaz Jardim, a historian at the university, who will discuss the trials of Ilse Koch, "The Bitch of Buchenwald."

Other programs during the week include "Restoring Family Trees Severed by the Holocaust" (Nov. 3 at Kehillat Shaarei Torah) and "Justice and Forgiveness," with three survivors who attended this year's trial of former Auschwitz guard Oskar Groening (Nov. 3 at Petah Tikva Congregation).

On Nov. 5 in the evening, scholar-in-residence Hilary Earl, a Holocaust historian at Nipissing University, will speak about the reintegration of Nazi war criminals into German society, at Beth Tzedec Congregation; while Adara Goldberg, education director of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, will discuss "Holocaust Survivors in Canada: Exclusion, Inclusion, Transformation," at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue.

On Oct. 22, the Azrieli Foundation held a gala at the Carlu to mark the 10th anniversary of its Holocaust survivors memoirs program and to launch "RE:COLLECTION," a new online initiative that lets users explore the first-hand accounts of Holocaust survivors.

Portraits of HEW's 46 survivor speakers, by Toronto photographer Elliot Sylman, will be on display at the Miles Nadal JCC from Nov. 1 to 26.

The week will finish on Nov. 9, the 77th anniversary of Kristallnacht, with a talk at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation by architecture professor Marc Grellert, of the Technical University of Darmstadt. He will discuss the digital reconstruction of synagogues in Germany that were destroyed during Kristallnacht. ■

More at holocausteducationweek.com

RETIRED **LIFE**

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS

CJN

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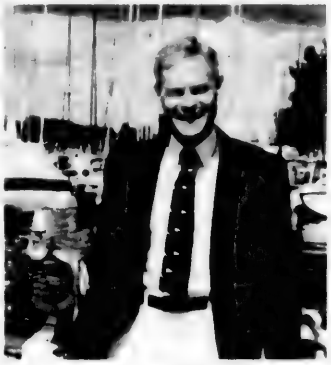
OJA collects stories of South African Jews

For more than 40 years, the Ontario Jewish Archives, Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre (OJA) has been collecting and the preserving the stories of our Jewish community. Earlier this year, they launched the South African Legacy Project, an exciting initiative to collect material from South African Jews who immigrated to Ontario.

Over the past year, many Jewish Southern Africans have shared their stories and records (photos, letters, memoirs, scrapbooks) with the OJA as part of a special initiative to document and preserve the community's immigration experiences. This is the OJA's first collection development initiative focused on a specific immigrant group, and the OJA plans to use this pilot as a model to work with other groups in the future. The OJA has been working with a committee including Stephen Pincus, Colin Baskind, John Cohen, Lorraine Sandler and Heather Super.

Although the first large wave of immigrants from Southern Africa started arriving in Canada soon after the Soweto Riots in 1976, a small number of immigrants did begin arriving as early as the 1950s. The earliest immigrant to connect with the OJA is Percy Skuy, a pharmacist who ended up in Toronto by chance in 1957. He had run short on money while travelling through the United States and needed to earn enough for the fare back to Africa. Unable to work in the States, he headed to Toronto to find work, accepting a sales position that came with a car. "I took it really for the car ... and never left. I fell in love with Toronto."



Ivor Simmons at Island Yacht Club, 1994

Percy Skuy at Redpath Pharmacy, 1960

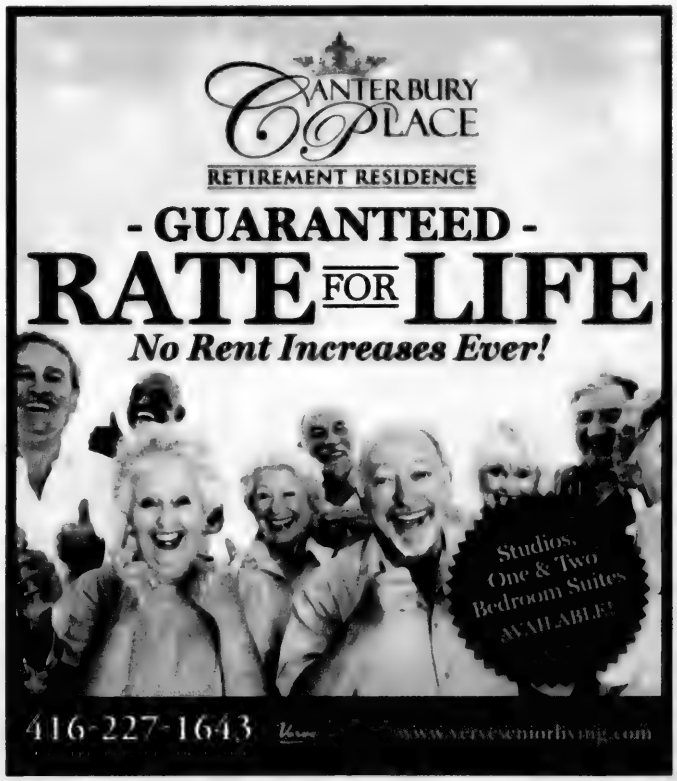
On the 2011 National Household Survey, 4,725 Jews from Toronto indicated they were born in South Africa. Although relatively few in number, project chair Stephen Pincus explains, "immigrants from Southern Africa have had a significant impact on Canada in a broad range of fields.

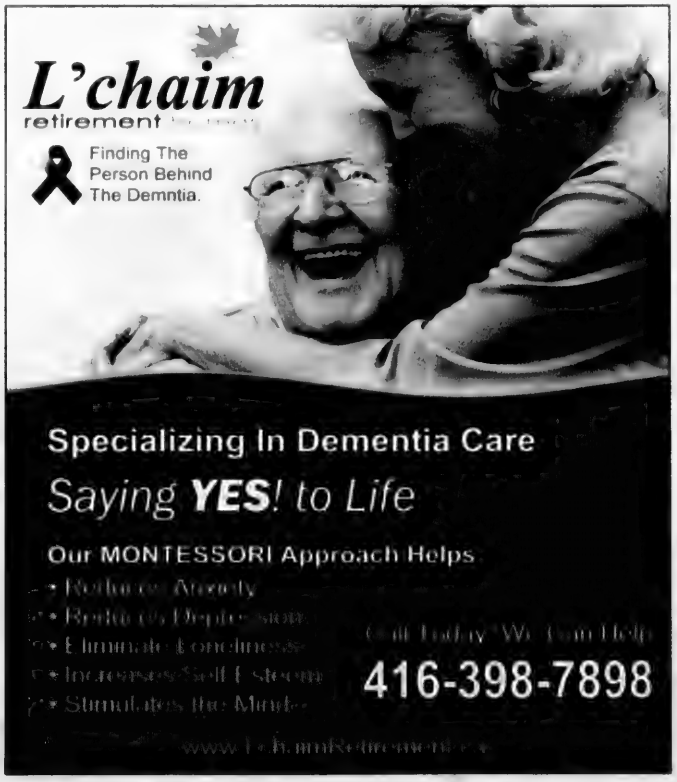
"We hope that the Legacy Project will document many of the fascinating stories comprising this remarkable immigration."

As more individual stories come into the archives, the larger community story is beginning to emerge: why they left South Africa and Zimbabwe, why they chose Canada, initial impressions of Canada, the challenges they faced when integrating into life here, the differences and similarities in Jewish traditions, and the important role they have played in Ontario's Jewish community.

The project involves the collection of family portraits, images of holiday celebrations and other photographs, letters, speeches, family videos, diaries, and cookbooks. Everything collected is stored in the OJA's state-of-the-art storage vault and made accessible to researchers and will also be accessible on the OJA's website. This initiative is an opportunity to ensure that the stories of this unique immigrant experience are preserved for future generations. ■

If you would like to participate, please contact archivist Melissa Caza at 416-635-5391 ext. 5110 or by email at mcaza@ujafed.org





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Seniors surrounded by creative arts

The arts-based programs offered at the Terraces of Baycrest Retirement Residence and the Joseph E. Minnie Wagman Centre allow seniors a way to feel invigorated again.

Seniors attending the classes come from the Terraces of Baycrest and also the community. For many, creating art helps them achieve a renewed sense of self.

"Seniors form friendship bonds through the classes," says Merav Jacobson, marketing manager at the Terraces. "Social engagement gives them a sense of purpose."

Art classes are excellent for seniors because they're not a highly physical activity. Instead they flex the imaginative part of the brain. Creating art requires focus and follow-through, and seniors derive a sense of pride from creating something beautiful.

"Older adults have to deal with a lot of losses. They lose spouses, other family members and dear friends in their lives. They often lose certain physical abilities, and the whole point here, is to focus on what they're still able to do," Jacobson says.

Shirley Milner, 82, joined the Wagman Centre following a hospital stay that lasted almost a year. The hospital social worker recommended she get involved with community-based programs. Milner chose the Wagman Centre, and credits the experience for helping turn her life around.

"We work on projects that are so important," says Milner. "We are making Christmas cards for kids in a hospital. We also made 1,080 Rosh Hashanah bookmarks for Meals On Wheels, so that recipients also received a holiday greeting from us."

Milner has been taking art classes at the centre for over two years and takes the Wheel Trans bus in on weekdays. She adores the creative outlet and social interaction that the classes give her.

"I paint with acrylics, I do silk paintings, I did a beading program, and I've made gifts for my family. I find it the most amazing place," she says. "It's hard to explain, but it keeps your mind so busy, so occupied."

The membership fees for community members are reasonable at $80 a year, with some classes having additional nominal fees. For the Terraces residents all programs are included in their monthly rent along with a wide-range of support services such as meals and medical services.

The centre offers 130 programs each week.

"We offer music programs, theatre groups, dance therapy and creative arts classes, so there's something for everyone," Jacobson says. "Art is displayed across the building, but it's not a passive experience of just looking at it. Residents live it, they are surrounded by it. It's an important part of their life."

Shirley Milner creates art at the Terraces of Baycrest/ Wagman Centre.

Another popular program is the Dance Movement Therapy program. "It is more than just learning new dance styles to wonderful music," says Krista Samborsky, dance movement therapist at the Terraces/Wagman. "It is a time to come together with old and new friends to share a laugh and be creative."

Baycrest also has a Wellness Café program, which supports seniors in their journey to achieving physical, emotional and cognitive wellness. It offers educational and interactive workshops, including those on topics like memory health, safety in the community, art therapy and movement therapy. ■

For more information please contact Merav Jacobson, 416 785-2379, mjacobson@baycrest.org

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Baycrest introduces an exciting new program for seniors in the community

The Wellness Café supports seniors in their journey to achieving physical, emotional and cognitive wellness. Choose from a variety of educational and interactive workshops, including topics such as Memory Health, Safety in the Community, Art Therapy and Movement Therapy.

The program is offered one Friday each month, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and includes a nutritious kosher (COR) lunch. The cost of the program is $32/day. Transportation can be arranged at an additional cost.

For more information, contact Lisa Benaim at lbenaim@baycrest.org or 416-785-2500 ext. 2236.
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The songs powerfully convey the emotional journey of the survivors which included shock, anger, rage, depression, cynicism, and ultimately the desire to rebuild their lives. Together with English translations which will be provided, narration will give relevant backgrounds of the poets (H. Leivik, Itsik Manger, Kadya Molodowsky, Shmerke Kaczerginski, and Chaim Grade) and composers (Folk, Israel Alter, Beresovsky, Lazar Weiner and Maurice Rauch) as the music moves from utter despair to hope. Deborah will be accompanied by pianist Asher Farber.

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Living well is the best revenge

MARILYN LAZAR

Many seniors approach retirement unsure of what to expect with more time and less responsibility. Couple that with a cornucopia of age-related conditions and concerns, and add all this to the backdrop of a society that is exponentially speeding up while comprehension and metabolism may be slowing down.

How can we make sure our "olden" years are our "golden" years? Here are some tips:

Make and keep doctors' appointments. Stay on top of simple medical tests. Certain diseases are preventable with routine screening. Incorporate devices such as hearing aids to ensure that you don't miss one precious word of conversation that keeps you connected and vibrant. Confide in your family doctor about changes you are experiencing – and about your feelings with regard to these changes.

It's up to you whether you opt for prescription medication, natural supplements or lifestyle change – but knowing your options is an empowering feeling.

Increasingly, research findings support an active lifestyle and intense physical activity, and show the benefits are not just physical. Resistance training becomes even more important over time as it can mitigate age-related loss of muscle mass and bone density. Weight training continues to boost metabolism even when your body is at rest. Speeding up your metabolism will also give you a better appetite and increase your ability to ingest and digest all the nutrients your active body needs.

Seniors may need fewer calories as metabolism slows and activity level decreases. However, vitamins, minerals and protein are as crucial as ever. Ensure your meals are nutrient dense and appealing. Don't fall into an "I won't bother" pattern if you're eating by yourself. Even a main course of eggs is nutritious, delicious, economical and can be spruced up with cheese or fresh herbs. Experiment with a new recipe and invite a friend for dinner.

Stay in touch with people whom you care about and who care about you, be it friends or grandchildren. It's helpful to associate with individuals of all ages. Be informed and stay relevant.

Exercise your brain. Read the paper, watch the news and engage in dialogue with a variety of people. Take a course, whether it's a new language or art appreciation. Keep up with the times. Improve your skills by taking a class in a community college or continuing education setting. Email is a wonderful way to stay connected to people, no matter how far away or in what time zone. ■

Celebrating his second anniversary.

KEN HASLAM, AT CHARTWELL SINCE 2013.
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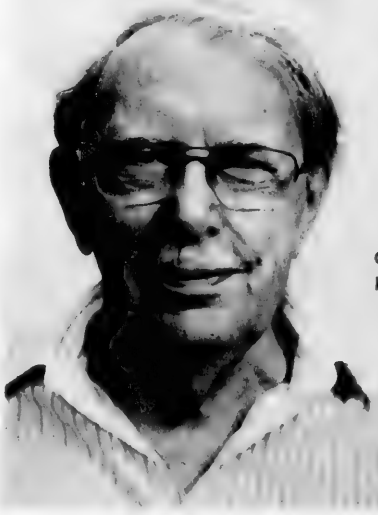

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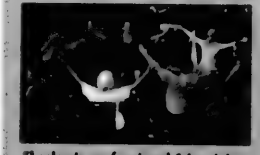

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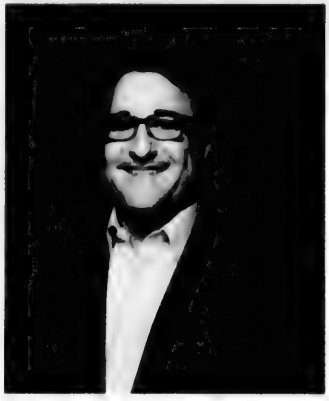
DAVID BERNSTEIN
PRESIDENT, CAREGIVER SERVICES LTD.



David Bernstein

As we age, most of us want to enjoy retirement in a comfortable, familiar setting – home. Sometimes, however, we need help. Often a family member or loved one can be there. If you've received care you know how critical that support is to your quality of life. If you have been there for a loved one, you know how emotionally exhausting being the provider can be. Sometimes, it's necessary to have assistance from a professional caregiver or personal support worker (PSW). Whoever provides it, caregiving adds tremendous quality to the lives of everyone involved.

Living in a retirement home provides many benefits to help us live independently and get the support we need when necessary. But even in these environments our circumstances change and additional support is needed beyond what the retirement home can provide.

One of the most critical situations we face is hospital stays. Although our healthcare system can provide great care and our family's support is critical, to ensure that we or our loved one is consistently advocated for and engaged often requires additional support. PSWs and caregivers are ideally suited to provide this support as well.

> *Professional support from a caregiver or PSW can take many forms*

Professional support from a caregiver or PSW can take many forms:

- A three-hour visit, one day a week, for laundry, grocery shopping, companionship, and to drive you to an occasional appointment or for banking.
- A three-hour visit, three days a week in a retirement home to help with exercises, go for a walk or grocery shop.
- A three-hour visit each morning and evening to assist with bathing, toileting, medicine reminding, meal preparation and generally getting ready for and closing out the day.
- An eight-hour daily visit to assist with personal care, light housekeeping, meal preparation, medication reminding, and to help with mobility and general safety.
- 12-hour overnight care in a hospital while our loved one recuperates from surgery.
- 12-hour daytime care in a hospital to ensure our loved one is advocated for and engaged when we can't be there.
- 12-hour overnight palliative care to ensure somebody is there at all times, giving family a chance to sleep.
- 24-hour live-in care for when family members travel or vacation.
- 24-hour care divided into two, twelve-hour shifts (a day shift and overnight shift) for an individual with significant mobility issues, Alzheimer's disease or dementia requiring constant monitoring.
- 24-hour live-in care where the overnights are not critical but assistance is needed during the day. Knowing someone is there at night can help give everyone involved peace of mind.

The goal is to understand your needs first and design a schedule with an experienced caregiver or PSW who best fits those needs.

Caregiving is about having the patience and empathy to help people in their most vulnerable states. Great caregiving respects and dignifies the lives people have built and lived, and strives to enrich their day-to-day experience wherever possible. ■

David Bernstein is president of Caregiver Services Ltd., a Toronto-based organization providing private home, hospital and facility care and 24-hour care. They can be reached in Toronto at 416-994-6096 and in York Region at 905-642-9494 or www.caregiverservices.ca.

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When homeland becomes home

DEBORAH FINEBLUM SCHABB
JNS

Like other Jews his age, Gerry Wine remembers the day Israel was born – May 14, 1948 – and the United Nations vote the previous November that opened the door to a Jewish state. He was eight years old.

"These were magical moments for all of us, very, very exciting times," Wine says. "Even us kids were celebrating."

Growing up, Wine recalls wearing blue and white to religious school to honour the nascent state, dropping coins for tzedakah into the blue tin box in the kitchen. But he didn't truly begin to appreciate the miracle of Israel until he was married and a young father, and a non-Jewish friend told him after the Six-Day War in 1967, "'You guys really know how to whup 'em.'

"That offhand comment of his planted a seed, a sense of pride in our people," says Wine.

Even so, Wine never dreamed that the infant nation his family was cheering back in 1948 would become his home more than six decades later.

The official reason Wine and his wife Sandy made aliyah in 2012 was that his son and his family were already living in Modi'in, midway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

"They certainly were the big green light," says Sandy Wine, 74. "But what I did not expect was to fall in love with Israel. If you'd told me 10 years ago I would be living here and loving it, I would have thought you were crazy. Now all I want to know is why doesn't everyone live here?"

As a 19-year-old, Hannah Libman recalls sweating each UN vote.

In 2012, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visits a retirement home, showing residents a picture of David Ben-Gurion's announcement of Israeli independence.
AMOS BEN GERSHOM/GPO/FLASH90

> *What I did not expect was to fall in love with Israel*

"I sat near the radio and counted them as they came in," she says. "I can still feel it, it was so huge, the joy of it, but also the fear that we would not get the votes we needed."

Understanding that the Holocaust preceded Israel's establishment, Libman valued the moment all the more. She was born in Germany in 1936, and her family escaped before Hitler's net closed on the rest of her relatives.

"We didn't know the details until later, but we knew what was happening over there was terrible, that my grandparents were missing and my father's Polish family was also missing," Libman says. "To us, we knew Israel would be a place where Jews could be safe."

Like the Wines, Libman and her husband Alfred were pulled to Israel by family – a daughter, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. With Hannah now 86 and Alfred nearly 90, the Libmans arrived last summer, and are now living in Jerusalem senior housing.

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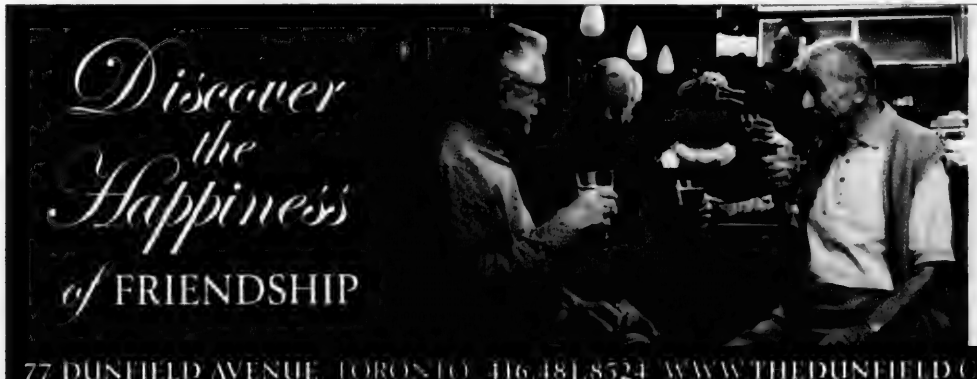
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Seniors begin new life adventure in Israel

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Chaya (Claire) Subar, has since 2007 also counted herself a resident of Jerusalem, along with her husband David. Having narrowly escaped death at the hands of the Nazis and spent the war years being cared for by Polish farmers, Subar reunited with her mother by 1948 and was living in a community of Holocaust survivors in Stuttgart, Germany.

"I remember seeing a picture of a short guy with bushy eyebrows and bushy hair," says Subar, who is now in her mid-70s. "And I knew that he had something to do with a new country for Jewish people. Everyone we knew was so happy."

Indeed, Holocaust survivors had a deep appreciation for the newly established Jewish state.

Carl and Anita Jacobs, who left for Jerusalem four years ago, are both the same age as the State of Israel – 67.

"Everywhere we go there are these neon signs that say '67' and... I know we're 67, but now they are constantly reminding us," Anita says with a laugh.

In perhaps the ultimate introduction to the Jewish state, Anita had the chance to spend time with former prime minister Golda Meir, who stayed at the family's New Jersey home during a fundraising tour in the 1950s.

"She was very much like my bubbe, very gentle – and taller than you'd think," says Anita.

Even as a child, Anita came to understand the importance of Israel.

"I knew even then that this land is my heritage, and I really wanted to be a part of it," she says.

As a teenager, Anita would help finance her very first trip to Israel in 1965 with her babysitting earnings. Though "jobs and kids and elderly parents" would keep Anita and Carl from leaving for many years, they are now (mostly) retired and free to live their Israel dream, which includes regular army base volunteer stints through the IDF's Sar-El program.

"Living here at our age is the frosting on the cake of our lives," says Hannah Libman, who was scurrying around her apartment preparing lunch for four granddaughters. "We had a wonderful life (before), but now I feel like I came home."

As to what the future holds for their adopted homeland, most of the seniors

JNS.org spoke with are cautiously optimistic. Carl Jacobs is concerned by the recent surge in anti-Semitic attacks around the world and the ongoing negative media coverage of Israel.

"Plus so many Jewish kids in North America are not prepared to refute it," he says. "They just don't know the real story of the Jewish people and the importance of Israel."

Sixteen years into her life in Israel, Barbara Greenberg describes herself as "optimistic, because our greatest strength is our people, the mix of people from all over, and for the most part, everyone gets along. We understand the importance of having a Jewish state, especially since our homeland has become our home too." ■

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Four Elms gets an inspired makeover

It's the same great services with a brand new attitude.

Four Elms Retirement Residence, located at Steeles Avenue and Dufferin Street, has now taken on a new name, Verve Senior Living, and that means some exciting changes are well underway.

"We are now Inspired Senior Living with Verve, and so we've taken on a new philosophy on how we operate," said Reesa Soto, marketing manager for Four Elms. "Diversicare (who owned and operated us) was known for its care, and we will still offer superior care, but we also want to ensure that all of our community members here are inspired and feeling fulfilled on a day-to-day basis.

"We want to do whatever it takes to make them feel that way. We want everyone to have a great day, every day."

Four Elms wants its community members to thrive and have a purpose, and its new mantra should lead to that. "The philosophy is for us to create communities where spirit, body and mind flourish every single day. That's really what we're all about. It's all about making a difference in the lives of people living with us.

"We obviously do that by providing superior care and wonderful social, fitness and wellness activities, which are a huge component. That's what makes everything so great here," Soto says.

With events including daily fitness and ranging from painting classes to lectures to live entertainment and outings in their van, there is plenty to keep the residents going. "They wake up each morning and have a purpose to get dressed and come downstairs," Soto said. "There's three delicious and amazing meals there for them every day in the dining room and a huge selection of activities."

With Inspired Senior Living with Verve, the idea of keeping the community members mentally and emotionally healthy is every bit as important as the physical aspect. "If we're not inspiring them, they're not going to be happy," Soto said. "They need to be stimulated.

"A lot of these people are coming from homes they've lived in for 50 to 60 years, or condos, where they were feeling kind of lonely and isolated," Soto added. "Their children are working full time and their grandchildren are working or in school. In order for them to come here and feel good, they have to feel inspired. It's all part of it."

Four Elms still offers the ability for community members to age in place, being able to provide assisted living care in one's suite along with other supplementary care services. They also continue to use BrainGym, a multi-sensory brain stimulation program, for those residing on its memory-care floor, and it is available for all other Four Elms community members. Four Elms has a good number of Jewish community members and provides the opportunity for them to stay in touch with their religion.

"We are servicing independent seniors and we have a large Jewish population," Soto said. "Friday afternoons we have a pre-Shabbat service and Friday night there's always a Shabbat menu option. We celebrate all of the holidays, with Chanukah and Passover and Rosh Hashanah." ■

For more information on Four Elms, you can visit its website at fourelms.ca.

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Jerome Diamond had a passion for social work

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Jerome Diamond

Sara Diamond remembers that when she was growing up, her father Jerome Diamond, who died Oct. 19 at the age of 100, told her there were three things she needed to learn how to do as a woman: fly a plane, drive a car and type.

"He was the kind of father who would get you a science kit and a Betty Crocker baking oven... He built a flight simulator for me that I used to practise flying with him every summer. At 16, he made sure I learned to drive a car. I was a little more resistant about the typing," she chuckled.

Diamond, who was born in 1915 to Jewish American parents in New York City, was extremely devoted to social service work and a trailblazer in the Jewish community for advocating open dialogue about violence against women.

Diamond was also a decorated military man, receiving a Bronze Star in World War II. He served in the first integrated regiment of the U.S. Corps of Engineers as a major, designing and building the landing craft that carried tanks and heavy artillery to Omaha Beach on D-Day in June 1944.

In addition to his passion for social justice, Diamond was extremely handy.

He initially studied engineering at City College of New York City, where he received a bachelor of science degree.

Sara said her father was pursuing a law degree when he realized that what he really wanted was to serve the larger Jewish community. "Service was in his bloodstream – my dad was amazing that way. He really cared about people and wanted to make sure they had the quality of life that he believed was possible in postwar American and Canadian society."

Diamond went on to get a master's in social work from the University of Pennsylvania and began studying psychoanalysis in order to qualify as a psychiatric social worker.

He became director of the Bronx Jewish Family and Child Services and worked there until 1959, when he was offered the job of executive director of Jewish Family and Child Service in Toronto.

He moved to the city with his first wife Mary Swit Diamond, a family court judge and social worker, and worked at JF&CS until his retirement in 1981.

In the 1970s, Diamond founded a JF&CS youth mental health centre called Centre Shelanu, which was later re-named, in his honour, the Jerome D. Diamond Centre for Adolescents.

The centre provides counselling, education and a safe space for young people struggling with psychological, behavioural and academic challenges.

An ardent supporter of society's most marginalized people, Diamond was one of the first men in social services to bring the issue of violence against women in the Jewish community to the fore, urging that it be countered through dialogue and action.

"For his generation, he was incredibly progressive regarding the rights of women. He got that from his unbelievable mother – my Grandma Rose – who lived with him and my stepmother until she died. She instilled strong Jewish values in my father, like the passion and demand for service to one's community," Sara Diamond said.

Diamond was also known for forging alliances between Jewish, Catholic and secular social services and consulting on the development of legislation such as the Family Law Reform Act and the Young Offenders Act.

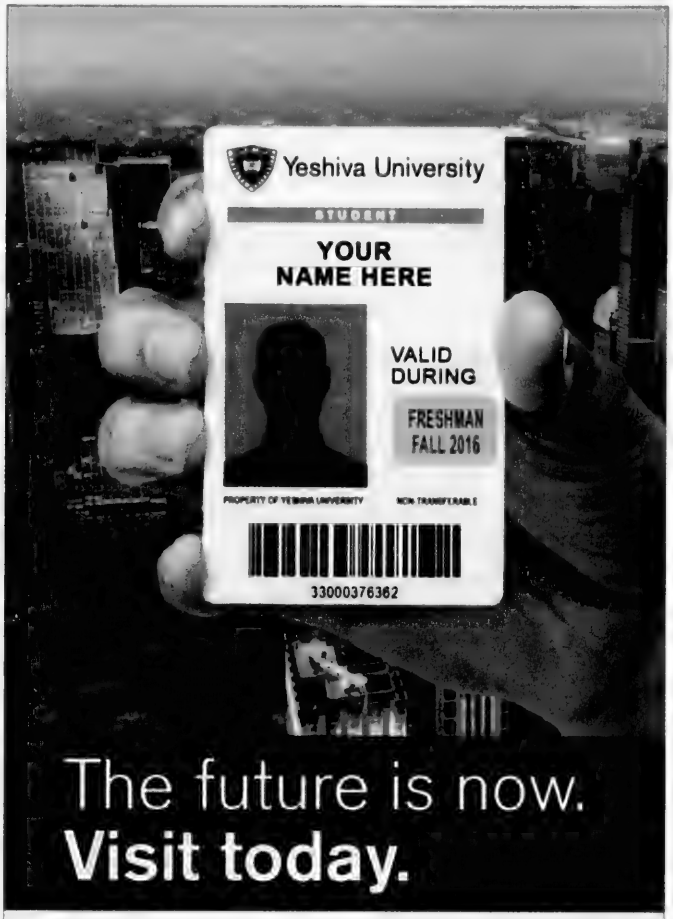
His social service work included helping Latin American immigrants to Canada who were victims of torture and families dealing with Holocaust trauma.

After his first wife passed away in 1964, Diamond married Sheila Senderowitz Diamond, who died when he was in his 80s.

Diamond cared deeply about his Judaism, returning to religion with renewed vigour after his first wife's death and becoming very involved in Holy Blossom Temple, where he sometimes led services.

Diamond spent the last year and a half of his life living in Baycrest. He died from Alzheimer's disease several days after celebrating his 100th birthday with family and friends.

He is survived by daughter Sara, son Larry Diamond and stepdaughter Carla Silver, as well as granddaughters Marissa Diamond, Beth and Amy Silver and sister-in-law Rose Wolfe. ■



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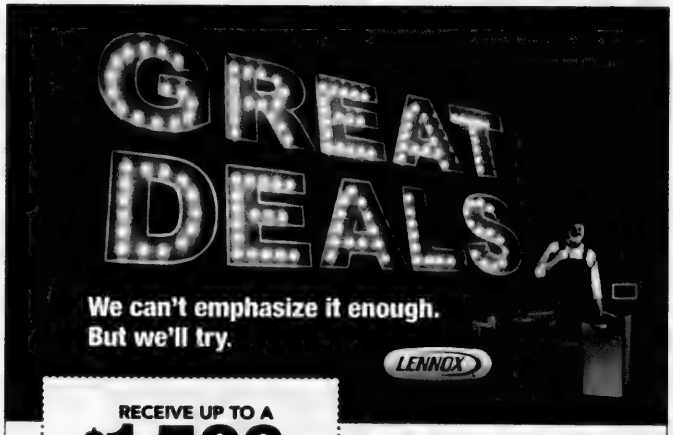

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Ottawa woman needs urgent kidney transplant

Leslie Kaufman with her grandson

DIANE KOVEN
OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT

An urgent plea is being made to find a living liver donor to save the life of a member of the Ottawa Jewish community.

Leslie Kaufman, vice-president of corporate services at the Jewish Federation of Ottawa (JFO), is fighting for her life in the Toronto General Hospital's transplant unit.

Her husband, Sam Greenspon, said Kaufman, 56, had been ill for several years, but with a variety of seemingly unrelated symptoms which, in retrospect, seem to have been the cause of her liver failure. Last winter, during a bout of what she thought was bronchitis, Kaufman was prescribed antibiotics. She became jaundiced and was diagnosed in February with primary biliary cirrhosis, a disease in which the bile ducts in the liver are slowly destroyed. Greenspon said that this is an autoimmune disease and Kaufman was probably born with it.

After being in and out of hospital during the summer, Kaufman returned to the hospital this fall with dehydration. She was immediately flown to the Toronto General where she remains, waiting desperately for a liver donation.

Rabbi Reuven Bulka, rabbi emeritus of Ottawa's Congregation Machzikei Hadas, has for many years been involved with educating and encouraging the community at large, and the Jewish community in particular, to become organ donors. He is the chair of Trillium Gift of Life Network, the provincial agency responsible for organ and tissue donation and transplantation, which also has a program for reimbursing expenses of living organ donors.

Rabbi Bulka partnered with the Ottawa federation to send out an email appeal for a live liver donor.

"Organ donation is all about saving lives. Saving lives is the pre-eminent kindness we can do for others... It enhances lives and uplifts the donor and the donor's family. It is magical," he said. "Leslie's situation is heart-wrenching, and we fervently hope a donor will come forward."

One potential donor is Kaufman's colleague Bram Bregman, vice-president of community building at the JFO. "With 100 per cent support by my amazing wife, I am being tested to donate a portion of my liver to my dear colleague, Leslie," Bregman said.

"Although I feel nervous, especially with 15-month-old twins at home, I felt it was the right thing to do. I have been raised in a community that taught me to think of others, to be a giver, and that life matters more than anything else, and this is what I want to pass on to my children."

Andrea Freedman, president and CEO of the JFO, is a colleague and a friend of Kaufman's. "This is deeply personal and professional for me. Leslie is a fantastic colleague and Jewish communal professional, selflessly serving our community. And she is also a doting grandmother who came to the office every Monday morning with a new story about her grandson. It keeps me up late at night knowing that someone out there has the power to save Leslie's life, and it is our responsibility to keep looking until we succeed in finding a match," she said.

Many people are unaware that a donor's liver will completely regenerate itself within a couple of months and that a potential donor does not have to be a blood relative but must have a compatible blood type.

If you are willing to begin the process of being tested for suitability and to do the greatest mitzvah of helping to save a life, please contact the Toronto General Hospital's Living Donor Liver Office co-ordinator at 416-340-4800, ext. 4711. ■

Trudeau: No reason to expect he'll disappoint the Jews

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

During the 2014 conflict between Israel and Gaza, Trudeau released a statement that said, "Israel has the right to defend itself and its people. Hamas is a terrorist organization and must cease its rocket attacks immediately."

He condemned Hamas for rejecting an Egyptian proposal for a ceasefire while commending Israel for accepting it "and demonstrating its commitment to peace."

In March, when McGill University students were called on to vote in support of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel, Trudeau tweeted, "The BDS movement, like Israeli Apartheid Week, has no place on Canadian campuses. As a @McGillU alum, I'm disappointed."

Benlolo said he's encouraged by that kind of rhetoric.

"This is a good starting point, and I have no reason to expect that Mr. Trudeau will disappoint the Jewish community in Canada."

Nelson Wiseman, a professor of political science at the University of Toronto, said he suspects that under Trudeau's leadership, Canada will continue to support Israel, as it has traditionally.

"It might abstain more in the UN on issues. Its diplomats are going to be given a looser leash in the area… I think it will be more the way it was during the Chrétien years, which isn't really, in terms of content, much different," Wiseman said.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs president and CEO Shimon Fogel, suspects that there will be differences in "style and emphasis."

"However, Prime Minister-designate Trudeau has been clear that his government's policies on the core issues of concern to the pro-Israel community will entirely reflect the positions staked out by the previous government," Fogel said.

"We believe that Canada's positions on these issues will reflect a degree of continuity and stability, including unequivocal support for Israel –diplomatically, in terms of security, opposition to radicalism, the demonization of Israel and the legitimacy of the Jewish state."

Karen Mock, co-founder of the left-leaning Zionist organization JSpace and the former director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, said she's confident Trudeau will make Canadian Jews feel as safe and supported as Harper did.

"I think he will be as good a friend in the kinds of things he says about Israel. I think he will be a better friend in having the ability and credibility and the commitment to actually put into practice the peacekeeping, the negotiations, the bringing of parties together and regaining our stature on the world stage," said Mock, who ran as a Liberal in 2011, when she lost to Tory Peter Kent in Thornhill.

Myer Siemiatycki, a professor of politics and public administration at Ryerson University, said he thinks Trudeau is off to a good start on the Israel file.

> *He has signalled his commitment to the security of Israel*
>
> **Myer Siemiatycki, professor of politics, Ryerson University**

"He has signalled his commitment to the security of Israel, and he has also signalled, in a way that may prove to be more beneficial to Israel, a kind of openness to dialogue and to Canada playing something of a mediating, honest broker role, and significantly promoting a two-state solution. That might actually prove to be much better in Israel's interests in terms of getting to a point of security, peace, etc.," Siemiatycki said.

On the economic front, part of Trudeau's platform was to introduce an income tax cut for the middle class – reducing the 22-per-cent tax rate for people who make between $44,701 and $89,401 a year, to 20.5 per cent – while creating a new tax bracket of 33 per cent for those earning more than $200,000 a year.

Trudeau also proposed a plan to run a $10-billion deficit every year for three years to stimulate the economy and pay for such things as public transit and affordable housing for seniors.

"He is certainly being recognized as the boldest in terms of the three leaders, on the fiscal approach, and all will depend on how it pans out, what the money gets spent on, what the impact of that spending is," Siemiatycki said.

"If it's a disaster, it'll become another argument, for 'No, no, no, you should never get into deficits.' But we have the irony that in virtually every one of his years, that is exactly where Mr. Harper took us. So no one is particularly consistent."

Although the Conservatives had raised the federal deficit to $36 billion in 2010, earlier this year, the Harper government balanced the budget and Canada boasted the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio among the G7 countries.

But the Bank of Canada announced on Oct. 21 that it's reducing its prediction for economic growth for 2016, from 2.3 per cent to two per cent.

Mock said a deficit is nothing Canada can't handle, as long as "we invest in better infrastructure and creating more jobs."

Fogel said Trudeau will be judged by his record and achievements.

"While economic performance is an important element of that record, so, too, are other considerations, like social policy and health care, the environment and foreign policy, law and order and federal-provincial relations. It is a bit early to get out the scorecard just yet." ■

Harper: Online campaign celebrates ex-PM's leadership

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Karen Mock, former director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada and co-founder of JSpace, an organization that represents left-leaning Zionists, said Harper's outspoken support of Israel "was a benefit to the Jews in that it made us feel better to hear our prime minister say the kinds of things that he did. But in my view, there was not a tangible benefit to Israel in terms of moving the peace process forward and enhancing her safety and security, enhancing negotiations with neighbours who are hostile, or enhancing the functioning of the UN in terms of our ability to negotiate."

She said Harper may also be remembered for the niqab controversy that stemmed from a 2011 Conservative government policy banning women from covering their faces while taking their citizenship oaths. Harper argued that it was a national security measure.

> *Harper was seen as a great supporter of Israel, but also as a unique voice on the world stage, with many considering him the only world leader to put values before political calculations*
>
> **Dan Illouz, political strategist in Israel**

"Mr. Harper went crazy over two women in 10 years who wanted to wear a niqab when swearing an oath, after being identified by the authorities, and having a microphone so they can hear it verbalized," said Mock, who ran unsuccessfully for the Liberals in Thornhill in 2011.

She added that if Harper has a legacy, in her opinion, it's not a positive one.

"The legacy is that some people felt good, but it's more a 'fallout,' because there was a fractiousness and divisiveness in the community, and now we need to embark on a healing process," she said.

"Pitting one group against another – that is the legacy of Harper. Pitting Jews against Jews, Muslims against Jews, Jews against Arabs."

Of course, there are many who disagree and will always be grateful to Harper for his steadfast, vocal support of Israel. In the hours following the election last week, Dan Illouz, a leading political strategist and analyst in Israel, and a former Canadian, started a campaign called, "The World Thanks Stephen Harper for his Leadership," with a goal of collecting 100,000 signatures.

"Harper was seen as a great supporter of Israel, but also as a unique voice on the world stage, with many considering him the only world leader to put values before political calculations," Illouz said.

"He stood up against ISIS, refused to automatically accept any nuclear deal with Iran and vocally opposed Russia's invasion of Ukraine. His principled foreign policy was said to have cost Canada a seat on the Security Council at the United Nations, but Harper said he never regretted it."

In two days, more than 12,200 people signed the online letter.

"Thank you for your steadfast support of Israel, for your opposition to radical Islam and to all other tyrannical regimes, and for your fight for freedom around the world and inside Canada," the letter said. ■

INTERNATIONAL

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Thousands pay respects to Howie Rothman

Canadian-Israeli wounded in November 2014 synagogue attack dies of his injuries

TAMAR PILEGGI
JERUSALEM

Mourners attend the funeral of Chaim Rothman in Jerusalem. YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

Chaim (Howie) Yehiel Rothman

Canadian-Israeli Chaim (Howie) Yehiel Rothman, who died of injuries he sustained during a deadly terror attack at a Jerusalem synagogue almost a year ago, was laid to rest Oct. 24 in an emotional ceremony at the capital's Givat Shaul cemetery.

Thousands of friends, family and other members of the community paid their respects to Rothman, who had been in a coma ever since two east Jerusalem terrorists armed with a gun, axes and meat cleavers stormed the Bnei Torah Synagogue in Har Nof last November and attacked worshippers.

Toronto-born Rothman suffered a number of blows to his head from an axe when he tried to fight off the terrorists, his family said. Five others were killed in the attack – four worshippers and one policeman. The attackers were eventually killed in a shootout with police.

Rothman's death brings the death toll in the attack to six.

"He was an exceptional man, a devoted father and husband," his brother Steven Rothman, who lives in Toronto, told *The CJN*. "Everyone who knew him respected him and loved him. He always put everybody else ahead of himself. He is a man who didn't deserve this kind of a fate. He deserved to be on this earth a lot longer and to be able to do his good deeds."

Rothman said that when he visited his brother in January, they were encouraged by some improvements in his condition.

He was transferred to Beit Levenstein, a rehabilitation centre in Ra'anana in January.

"He was there for about six months. If anyone could have done something for him, it would have been the brain trauma centre at Beit Levenstein. After six months, they felt they couldn't do anything for him so he was moved back to the Herzog hospital in Jerusalem so he could be closer to the family and the Har Nof community," Rothman said.

"He wasn't making any progress at all. In fact, things were just slowly but surely getting worse for him. He came down with pneumonia and he was just getting all kinds of infection... he was just getting weaker and weaker."

Mourners at the funeral recited passages from the Book of Psalms before Bnei Torah's Rabbi Mordechai Hacohen Rubin eulogized the 55-year-old Rothman.

"It's been almost a year and our hearts are boiling again," Rubin said. "It's been a year since the attack and we cannot forget what our eyes have seen or return to a normal routine. Again death is at our window, as if the heavens are reminding us to 'remember, and not to forget,'" he said.

"Remember what Ishmael did to you," he added, evoking the biblical commandment to commemorate the atrocities committed against the Israelites by the Amalekites.

"The two villains slaughtered and shot people, leaving five widows and 35 orphans," he said.

Earlier that night, Howie Rothman's daughter Yaffa confirmed her father's death in an emotional Facebook post, and praised him for confronting the terrorists and saving others during the attack.

"Dad is gone... He was killed by animals lacking humanity," she wrote. "But he fought them, and saved other worshippers.

"May his memory be a blessing, and please, come join us in honouring the best man there is one final time," she wrote.

"He was a true servant of God, a happy Jew who always rushed to fulfil a mitzvah," one of the family's neighbours told Channel 10.

The ultra-Orthodox Har Nof neighbourhood where the attack occurred sits at the western edge of Jerusalem, and had been mostly shielded from the violence stemming from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that often wracks the capital.

The attackers stormed the synagogue shortly after 7 a.m. on Nov. 18, 2014, killing worshippers Rabbi Moshe Twersky, Aryeh Kupinsky, Rabbi Kalman Levine and Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Goldberg, along with policeman Zidan Saif.

Footage of the synagogue attack showed Saif – a traffic cop and one of the first to arrive at the scene – played a key role in ending the attack, firing from outside the synagogue at the terrorists inside, before one of them ran out and shot him at close range. The Druze officer was posthumously decorated with the Medal of Distinguished Service.

The attackers were Uday and Ghassan Abu Jamal, cousins from the east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Jabel Mukaber.

Rothman never regained consciousness after the attack.

His brother told *The CJN* the doctors called the family together to give them an opportunity to be at his side.

"Risa [his wife] and the children and my brother Jeff, who lives in the northern part of Israel, were called to be by his bedside along with some close members of the Har Nof community so they could say their goodbyes to him. Jeff called my mother, Molly [who lives in Toronto], and he put his cellphone beside Howie's ear so that my mother could say a few last words to him. It was very sad."

Steven Rothman said his mother travelled to Israel to sit shivah with the family, and he will join his family in Israel on Oct. 29.

He said he is currently in contact with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and One Family Fund to co-ordinate donations that community members can make to support Howie's family.

In the early days following the attack last November, with the help of federation and One Family Fund, about $100,000 was raised by the Toronto Jewish community. The Har Nof community also set up a fund and raised about $150,000 for the family.

"We're just so thankful for the things that people did in order to make his family's life a little more comfortable."

Chaim (Howie) Rothman, who immigrated to Israel 30 years ago, is survived by his wife, Risa, and 10 children.

Visitors to his hospital room said in recent weeks that he seemed to be aware of the people around him. His Canadian-born wife spent every day at his bedside. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com
With files from Sheri Shefa and JTA

To make a tax-deductible donation, contact:
One Family Fund Canada at 416-489-9687, ext. 200, or online at www.onefamilyfund.ca – Tribute Card – In memory of Howie Rothman z"l.
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Hamas may be directing terror attacks from Gaza

AVI ISSACHAROFF
JERUSALEM

The message from the Islamist Hamas terror organization – directed more at the Palestinian people than Israel – is clear: We are a part of this "intifadah" and we aren't going anywhere.

While the group, which rules the Gaza Strip, has a less prominent presence in the Palestinian Authority-controlled West Bank, its voice is still being heard with recent attacks.

On Oct. 22, a Palestinian teenager stabbed a soldier in the Gush Etzion settlement bloc south of Jerusalem; a day later, two 20-year-olds stabbed an Israeli man after unsuccessfully attempting to board a school bus full of children in the central city of Beit Shemesh.

The latter two, after being shot by security forces, were both discovered to be wearing t-shirts reading "Izz ad-Din al-Qassam" – the name of Hamas's armed wing. All three attackers were from the Hebron-area village of Surif, and two of them – one in each incident – were named Ghanimat.

In recent years, all Hamas terror attacks in the West Bank have been directed and co-ordinated by the group's "West Bank bureau." The bureau is situated in Gaza and overseen by Hamas operatives originally from the West Bank who were deported to Gaza during the prisoner exchange for captured IDF soldier Gilad Shalit in 2011.

A Hamas shirt was worn by one of the two terrorists who were shot by police after attempting to carry out a stabbing attack in Beit Shemesh on Oct. 22. YAAKOV LEDERMAN/FLASH90

The bureau is headed by Abd el-Rahman Ghanimat and Mazen Fuqha, the former a member of the notorious "Surif squad" – a terrorist cell headed by Ibrahim Ghanimat that was responsible for a series of attacks against Israelis in the 1990s. Abd el-Rahman Ghanimat was serving five life sentences when he was released under the Shalit deal.

The Ghanimat connection between the commander in Gaza and the terrorists on the ground immediately raises suspicions these attacks were not a local "lone wolf" terror initiative, but rather were carried out on explicit instructions from their "cousin." However, this is only a suspicion at this point.

Israel's security establishment has no knowledge of Hamas giving specific instructions of this nature, although it's clear that the directive of the "West Bank bureau" in Gaza is to carry out as many attacks as possible against Israelis.

This directive is no secret. Hamas' calls for violence are made frequently and publicly on media outlets, but the group has refrained from urging attackers to carry out more severe terror attacks, like the campaign of suicide bombing attacks against Israelis during the second intifadah at the start of the millennium.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

SOUTH AFRICAN LEGACY PROJECT

The Ontario Jewish Archives, Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre (OJA), is preserving and celebrating the rich heritage of Ontario's South African Jewish community.

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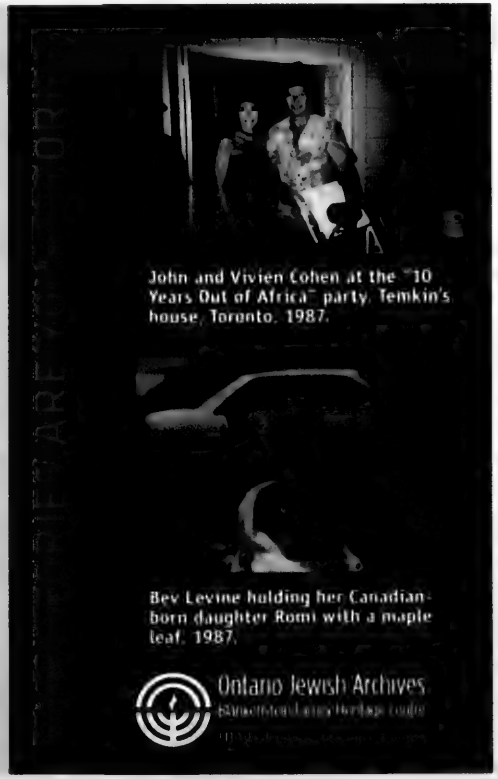
John and Vivien Cohen at the "10 Years Out of Africa" party, Temkin's house, Toronto, 1987.
Bev Levine holding her Canadian-born daughter Romi with a maple leaf, 1987.
Ontario Jewish Archives

Website tracks time between terrorist attacks

ROBERT SWIFT
JERUSALEM

"Israel has been terror attack free for 7 Hours, 26 Minutes, 43 Seconds... 44 Seconds... 45 Seconds," the text and the ticking clock at the top of a new website proclaim. Below the header, a list of recent attacks against Israelis scroll by.

The website "Israel Has Been Terror Attack Free For" was set up by Australian-based software developer Ofer Zelig in response to a new wave of violent Palestinian attacks since the start of October.

"Terror attacks are not something too new to Israelis," but the nature of the hostilities has changed recently, Zelig told *The Media Line*. Attacks with knives and vehicles against Israelis have become so commonplace, so constant that people walking in the street are always looking over their shoulder, Zelig said. "It's so frequent that you can measure the time between attacks in hours not days," he explained.

So continuous are the reports of stabbings that news organizations are beginning to turn their attention to other subjects, the website's designer suggested, pointing to a similarity in the way in which Palestinian rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel were covered by journalists in the past.

"Rockets became so common that the media stopped reporting them – it's not news anymore, people stop talking about it," Zelig said. Now as people begin to adapt to the new threat the same thing is happening with the knife attacks.

In an effort to fight this tendency, Zelig created his website which was inspired by a similar page, "Israel Has Been Rocket Free For", which documents artillery launches from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. The aim is to give people outside Israel an idea of the frequency of attacks.

But in creating the website its designer had to acknowledge a moral question: What constitutes a terrorist attack? "I include every terror attack which has Israeli casualties," Zelig said, explaining that there are around a dozen other attacks each day which don't cause casualties, such as stone-throwing incidents, which are not included. Attacks against civilians and those against security forces are not differentiated for the purposes of the timer, nor is the geographic location of where an incident took place.

> *It's so frequent that you can measure the time between attacks in hours not days*

The website's information comes from Israeli media outlets, which Zelig said he found generally trustworthy, though for accuracy he always corroborates sources against each other.

When covering attacks by Israelis against Palestinians, Zelig acknowledged that he wondered what to do. "I want to be fair, I want to include this stuff – on the other hand every person needs to promote stuff that is happening to their side, not the other way around," Zelig said.

Other Israelis have found a more pleasant way to respond to the attacks. A new Facebook group called Eatifada – a play on the Arabic word intifadah – urges Israelis to eat at restaurants hard-hit by customers who are staying home because of the violence. The idea is for diners to take pictures of their meals and share them online to show their support and to encourage others to do the same.

"Out on the town...can't keep a good country down! #eatifada," Josh Sussman wrote on the group's Facebook feed. "Join the #Eatifada. The only proper Jewish response to terror!" Daniel Goldman, another patron suggested.

Food-based responses have also been the basis for a number of efforts aimed at promoting interfaith unity. In the north of the country, a group of Jewish citizens began handing out baked goods to Arab construction workers in their neighbourhood while holding a sign which read "Peace of cake," in English, Arabic, and Hebrew.

Elsewhere, a hummus restaurant owner in northern Israel attracted attention when he offered to provide a second helping for free to diners at any tables made up of a mix of Jewish and Arab customers. The restaurant owner, Kobi Tzafrir, said that some customers even declined the free offer and paid in full in order to show their support for the initiative. ■

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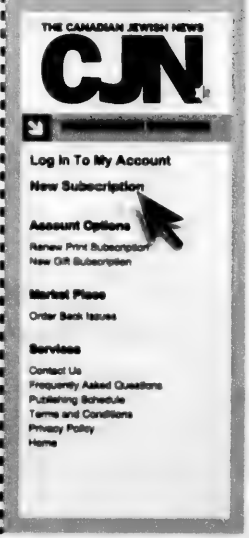

Rivlin vows never to release Yitzhak Rabin's killer

TAMAR PILEGGI
JERUSALEM

Marking the Hebrew 20-year anniversary of the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's President Reuven Rivlin said on Oct. 25 that he would never grant Rabin's killer a presidential pardon.

"As long as I am president, Yigal Amir will never be pardoned," Rivlin said. "May my right hand wither if I ever sign a pardon for that damned man."

Rabin was shot dead at the end of a peace rally on Nov. 4, 1995, by Amir, a right-wing extremist.

Addressing an annual memorial ceremony at the president's official residence in Jerusalem, Rivlin recalled a well-known satirical sketch by a comedy troupe, which aired shortly after Rabin's assassination. In the sketch, Amir, played by actor Rami Heuberger, delivers a monologue from inside a jail cell where he says, "I'll be pardoned in 20 years' time, and you all know it deep inside your heart."

The president said the sketch exposed the deep anxieties of left-wing Israelis at the time and also contributed to an atmosphere of delegitimization of the right.

Reuven Rivlin at a memorial ceremony for Yitzhak Rabin MARK NEIMAN /GPO/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Rivlin, who acknowledged that he disagreed with Rabin's approach toward rapprochement with the Palestinians, entailing territorial compromise, went on to warn that political violence erodes Israeli democracy, and encouraged Israelis to embrace one another's differences and promote shared values.

"The killer broke down a fence maintained by generations of Jews, and he may have left it broken," he said. "It's been 20 years since the murder, and we have to ask ourselves, 'Are we doing enough to seal what was breached by the murderer?'

"Are we doing enough to instill, again and again, awareness of the destructive potential of political violence?" Rivlin asked.

"We must ensure, for us and the next generations, that the day upon which we remember Rabin's murder will be a day belonging to all Israel – all its camps, all its sectors, a day of self-examination for the Israeli people, a time of self-examination for Israeli democracy," he said.

Rabin, a career soldier, served as Israel's chief of staff during the Six Day War in 1967 and was later appointed as the country's ambassador to the United States. In a second career, as a politician, he served as prime minister in the 1970s and 1990s and also held the post of defence minister for several years.

In 1994, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize – along with then-foreign minister Shimon Peres and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat – for his part in signing the Oslo peace accords a year earlier. ■

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SO HOW DOES A SNOWBIRD GET A DIVORCE?

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B. A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 33 years

So it's that time of year again. Halloween? Black Friday? No. For some of you, its time to plan your annual sojourn to the southern climes. And if you're a senior with a place in the States like Florida, you may have already booked your flights. So what if a Snowbird lives part of the year in Canada, the other part in Florida, and then wants a divorce? Divorce among seniors increases every year, especially now that the baby boomers have begun collecting their pensions. The problem may occur if both spouses are Snowbirds or if the one remaining in Canada refuses to commence a divorce application. Why? Well, to obtain a divorce from a Canadian court a married person or his spouse must have been separated for at least one year (in most cases) and has to be resident at least 12 months prior to commencing the Divorce proceeding. If one starts the Divorce proceeding in Florida one of the parties to the marriage must reside 6 months in the State before the filing of the petition. Unlike in Canada, there is no "one year of separation" rule to be divorced in Florida, but one cannot be remarried in Canada without one of the spouses having resided in Florida for one year prior to commencing the Florida divorce application. Without a one year separation, the Florida divorce would not be recognized in Canada.

The simple solution might be that after one year of separation: (a) lie about your residency status when you see your Canadian lawyer by simply showing him/her documents about your ownership of property in Canada or rental agreement or (b) stay at least 6 months in Florida before coming back to Canada to commence your divorce petition in that state. However, if you lie you may be committing a criminal offence by signing court papers that are false. If your spouse opposes the divorce and challenges your statement about your residency you could be inviting trouble. So don't lie.

So what's wrong with simply commencing your divorce proceeding in Florida by continuing to reside there for 6 months? Too many early bird specials?

Well, residing in Florida and not returning to Canada for that length of time, except for brief breaks, may not be realistic for many reasons: work or academic commitments, family responsibilities, overall cost of staying that long, and for some, health insurance issues/costs.

Finally, if a spouse also has a claim for property division, support or parenting, these issues can still be decided in a Canadian court without commencing a divorce application and before the one year of separation ends. One does not have to commence a Canadian divorce application for any of these remedies. If necessary, one can commence a lawsuit for any relief in these areas, except for the divorce itself, which can always be applied for later once the year ends.

Like everything, it's complicated and depends on the facts. So what does a Snowbird to get a Divorce? He flies first to his lawyer before getting his boarding pass.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, with experience in family law for 33 years. Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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Hamas instructs West Bank supporters

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

Hamas "instructions" for their West Bank operatives to carry out stabbing and shooting attacks have been largely supported by the Palestinian public.

So far, Hamas in Gaza has not paid a price from Israel for its role in inciting and encouraging the ongoing surge in violence. The organization's leadership, however, understands that if the current spate of attacks becomes more deadly, Israel may respond by striking Hamas targets in Gaza, a development the Islamist group wishes to avoid. A return to the 2000-2001 modus operandi would probably come with a heavy price tag.

Hamas is succeeding in painting itself as responsible for starting the current uprising against Israel, citing the Oct. 1 terror attack in the West Bank in which Eitam and Naama Henkin were gunned down in their car in front of their children. Some analysts believe it is no coincidence the deadly shooting attack on the Henkins occurred just days after a series of unprecedented demonstrations against Hamas rule in the Strip.

According to Israeli and PA intelligence, Hamas, at least for now, lacks the military infrastructure to carry out suicide attacks in Israel from the West Bank.

> *If the current spate of attacks becomes more deadly, Israel may respond by striking Hamas targets in Gaza*

But both Israel and the PA understand that a military infrastructure capable of co-ordinating larger attacks could be developed, even under the radar of local intelligence gatherers. In other words, one cannot dismiss the possibility that terror operatives – and not necessarily Hamas – will try to carry out suicide bombing attacks against Israelis.

Currently, Islamic Jihad is the group most likely to try a large-scale attack. If Jihad operatives do manage to carry out a major terror attack, it would return the group to centre stage and a prominent place in Palestinian public opinion. ■

Netanyahu's Holocaust claim called 'inflammatory rhetoric'

JTA
WASHINGTON

The White House said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's claim that a Palestinian leader came up with the idea for the Holocaust was part of a pattern of "inflammatory rhetoric" in the region.

"I don't think there's any doubt here at the White House who is responsible for the Holocaust that killed six million Jews," White House spokesman Eric Schultz said Oct. 22

"We here continue to stress publicly and privately that the importance of preventing inflammatory rhetoric, accusations or actions on both sides that can feed the violence. And we believe that inflammatory rhetoric needs to stop."

Netanyahu had said two days earlier that Hitler was planning only to deport the Jews until he met Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini, a Palestinian nationalist, in 1941, and agreed to his plea to mass murder the Jews.

"Hitler didn't want to exterminate the Jews at the time, he wanted to expel the Jews," Netanyahu said in his Oct. 20 address to the World Zionist Congress. "And Haj Amin al-Husseini went to Hitler and said, 'If you expel them, they'll all come here.' 'So what should I do with them?' he asked. He said, 'Burn them.'"

An array of Holocaust historians immediately debunked the claim, noting the mufti's relatively minor role in the Holocaust and that the Final Solution was already underway when Hitler and the mufti met in Berlin in 1941. Additionally, a transcript of the meeting does not reflect Netanyahu's account.

Germany's government refuted the claim as well just prior to a meeting between Netanyahu and the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, and Palestinian leaders and the Israeli opposition accused Netanyahu of distorting the past for political gain.

Netanyahu later said he did not mean to imply that Hitler and Nazi Germany were not responsible for the Holocaust, but hewed to his claim that al-Husseini played a major role in the Holocaust.

The White House reaction comes after Secretary of State John Kerry met Netanyahu in Berlin and urged Palestinians and Israelis to halt all incitement. ■

Jewish Life

Muzsikás performs Hungarian folk music that was all but lost in the Holocaust.

Concert features recovered music of prewar Hungary

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The lost Jewish music of Transylvania will be the focus of a Nov. 5 concert at the Toronto Centre for the Arts, featuring the acclaimed Hungarian folk ensemble Muzsikás.

More accurately, the music drills down even deeper than Transylvania, a region rich in Hungarian language and culture now wholly within Romania.

Presented by the Ashkenaz Foundation as part of Holocaust Education Week, the concert will focus mainly on the recently recovered folk music of the region of Máramaros, once home to 5,000 Jewish families.

The music, along with the families, all but vanished in the Holocaust. So the concert may aptly be called aural history.

The classically trained quartet, formed in 1973, will play a variety of instruments native to the region and are slated to be joined by soloist singer Agnes Herczku.

In its early years, the group was at the forefront of Budapest's *tanchaz* (dance-house) scene, and a roots music revival grew to national levels.

After the fall of communism in Hungary and Romania in the late 1980s, members undertook a challenging mission: find and preserve the Jewish music of Transylvania, and specifically of the northeastern Carpathian region of Máramaros, which today straddles Romania and Ukraine but where Hungarian culture was once dominant.

The sounds, meantime, were not quite klezmer, not quite Gypsy, and the drive to preserve them was not driven by personal imperative. None of the band members are Jewish.

"We admire Jewish culture and we got involved as though we got an inheritance, that it's our duty to collect and to make some memory of the lost Jewish tradition of peasant music of Hungary," Muzsikás member Daniel Hamar explains in a telephone interview from Hungary.

Hamar calls the music the band plays "traditional Hungarian village music" and "traditional Hungarian village Jewish music. We would like to show there isn't much difference between the two."

He explains: "A peasant farmer creates a special type of culture. There were very few people in Europe who could be Jewish and a farmer because Jews could not buy land, except in Transylvania."

So the region became a Petri dish in which Jews formed a peasant class and created a unique musical legacy.

"For centuries, Jews were the musicians of Transylvania, and only in the 19th century were they replaced by Gypsies," Hamar says.

When band members travelled the region, "we collected Jewish music but didn't find any Jewish musicians. So it's very tragic but a very typical story of eastern Europe. The culture survived but the people didn't."

The music they encountered "was extraordinary, something we never heard before. It completely changed our lives.

"The local musicians use a different technique than in classical. All of us are trained classical musicians. When we heard a violin, viola or bass, it was completely different than what we were used to in classical music. So we learned how to play, what the technique was and, most important, how to improvise. It was a new language for us."

Band members were encouraged by the Hungarian composers Zoltan Kodaly and Bela Bartok, who also collected and transcribed folk music. Hamar says there are some 200,000 recordings of folk and related music in the archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

"But it's very difficult to learn this music just by listening," he said.

Hamar himself plays double bass, a gardon, which resembles a cello but is played percussively like a drum, and something called "Jewish drums," best experienced live.

The music, he says, is reflective of the Jewish experience in the region: By turns "happy and something one would play at a funeral." ■

Muzsikás performs Nov. 5 at the Toronto Centre for the Arts. For tickets, visit ashkenaz.ca or call 416-979-9901.

A keen eye vs. a sharp tongue

Evelyn Tauben

Following Yom Kippur, social media flooded with indignation over a major mix-up at a Chicago news station that botched a well-intentioned effort to acknowledge the Jewish holiday. The image illustrating the report was of the yellow star that Nazis forced Jews to wear, complete with the German word "Jude" on a background of a concentration camp uniform.

After days of online vitriol, the president of the New York Board of Rabbis, Rabbi David Seth Kirshner, appealed to his network, sharing the apology issued by the broadcasters: "In the wake of a holiday about forgiveness, I humbly suggest we as a community accept the apology and stop circulating the picture and story. It was clearly a mistake, and to turn it into a viral anti-Semitic tirade, is a futile exercise."

While I concur, the question remains: "How did this happen?" The answer lies not in nefarious anti-Jewish sentiment, but in an epidemic of increasingly impoverished visual literacy, affecting even those in the business of disseminating images.

Over the course of history, forms, colours and symbols gather potent meaning.

I worked with a designer who submitted a clean, modern proposal for a conference poster; but in the combination of colour and form, I saw an echo of the pink triangle and requested a redesign. She obliged with the implication that I was overreacting, which I suspect was due in part to her lack of awareness that the pink triangle represented Nazi persecution of homosexuals.

On another marketing campaign for programs about contemporary Russian Jewish culture, I cautioned the designer against using red as the signature colour. Because, red plus Russia means something, especially to the Russian audiences we were targeting.

Over the course of history, forms, colours and symbols gather potent meaning. It's our responsibility to be able to "read" the signs of all cultures, not just our own. Hammer plus sickle means something. Star plus crescent means something. For Jews, blue plus white connotes tradition, the tallit, Israel itself. "*Kachol v'lavan*" is ubiquitous among Jewish organizations, trading creative experimentation for the significance suffused in the enduring colour combination.

Even when *The CJN* launched its long-awaited redesign in 2014, it did not depart from the predictable colour scheme. It's a welcome change when Jewish organizations push into new imaginative terrain. I support the intentions of another newspaper to diverge from "the traditional blue that anchored the *Forward* for years," as editor-in-chief Jane Eisner explained this past spring regarding the *Forward's* redesign process. The results, however, are disappointing.

Of their colour choice, Eisner wrote: "Gold is the emblem of excellence dating back to biblical times. And America was the *Goldene Medina* for the founders of the *Forward*." Eisner can call their new logo "gold" until she's Israeli-flag blue in the face but when I read the *Forward* online, all I see are yellow icons against a black banner – a stark, uninviting colourscape with a palette similar to the image that launched a firestorm at the Chicago broadcasters.

It would be absurd to suggest that a great Jewish newspaper has a covert anti-Semitic agenda any more than Chicago's WGN does; yet the choice of so-called gold on black is nearly as myopic as that Yom Kippur misstep. When paired, these colours trigger a series of historical associations and their usage suggests a befuddling disconnect from that reality.

When those whose very role it is to disseminate ideas and images demonstrate a lack of awareness of the iconography of our times, it is highly disconcerting. However, instead of merely attacking the media, the Jewish community, which places a premium on critical thinking and advanced study, should equally promote enhanced visual literacy both within the Jewish world and without.

Visual acumen is becoming ever more essential as both the public and the private spheres are flooded with imagery where even credible sources prompt close scrutiny. It behooves us all to absorb this barrage of visual information with a discriminating and sensitive eye, informed by history and global currents. ■

Originally from Montreal, Evelyn Tauben is a writer, producer and curator based in Toronto.

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Toronto actor and playwright explores themes of identity

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

For her latest onstage role, Toronto-based actor Aviva Armour-Ostroff might wear a corset for a play set in 1885. But the themes she helps bring to life in this piece of theatre resonate loudly today.

In *Age of Arousal*, which opened on Oct. 25 at the Factory Theatre, Armour-Ostroff is Virginia Madden, one of three sisters.

The play, by late renowned Canadian playwright, Linda Griffiths, and directed by the award-winning Jennifer Brewin, is set in Victorian London and explores feminism and sexuality against the backdrop of the suffragist movement.

Yet, Armour-Ostroff knows that these ideas are just as relevant now. "There's still a fight for equality," she says. Though she recognizes that we have made progress.

"We're definitely allowed to wear pants in public," she says. "We're allowed to cross our legs and we're allowed to smoke and we're allowed to be single and we're allowed to own our own money and be businesswomen."

Yet, on many television shows, for instance, she sees women pigeonholed to certain roles. She also knows that many of us still make assumptions about women and the positions we're supposed to hold in society.

As for Armour-Ostroff, she jumps in and out of numerous roles in the arts world. This year alone, she received a Dora Award nomination for her work in *Moment* with the Actors Repertory Company. She also won the Patrick Conner Award, given to an individual dedicated to theatre and sustainability.

For eight years, Armour-Ostroff ran the Lab Cab Festival along with her producing partner, André du Toit. Lab Cab started out as a cabaret fundraiser for the Factory Theatre and grew into a weekend-long arts celebration.

Eventually, she and du Toit held it in Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood where it ran until 2014. Lab Cab was a free, family-friendly event that made the arts accessible while also allowing artists to showcase their work. "People were seeing music and theatre and dance and film and visual art that they would never on their own volition go and seek out," says Armour-Ostroff.

While she's proud of the festival, she decided to retire it last year in order to focus on other facets of her career.

Aviva Armour-Ostroff

> *Writing comes out of necessity*

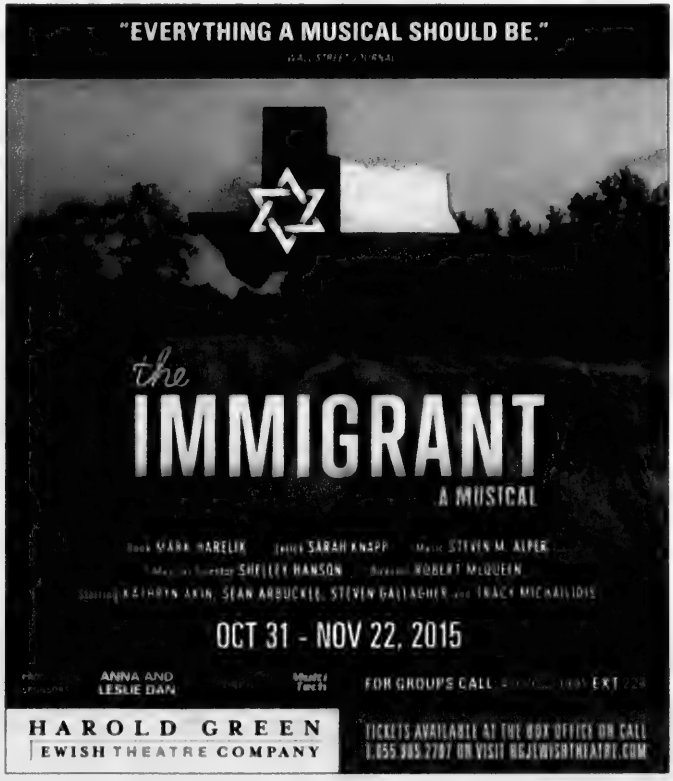
She's currently writing a play called *Lune* about a mother and daughter who must navigate the Canadian mental health-care system after the mother is diagnosed with bipolar disorder. The mother, a Jewish journalist, has a manic episode while reporting from South Africa in 1994.

Armour-Ostroff says it's based on her father and his experience as a South African Jewish man who was politically active around the same time.

"Writing comes out of necessity," she says. *Lune* will be her first play. "I was lying in bed one night going, 'I want to play this kind of character. I want her to be fierce, yet vulnerable. I want to be able to scream and cry. Oh, I want to play my dad.' That role is not going to get handed to you," she continues.

She notes that *Lune* explores themes of identity, and in a similar vein, so too does her character in *Age of Arousal*. In the play, she wrestles with alcoholism and strives to reconcile her outward personality with her inner self. "That's something that I think everyone struggles with and relates to." ■

Age of Arousal runs until Nov. 8 at the Factory Theatre in Toronto. For tickets call 416-504-9971 or visit factorytheatre.ca.



Jewish book awards carries on under new stewardship

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A new chapter of the Canadian Jewish Literary Awards opened on Oct. 18 as about 150 people gathered in an auditorium at York University in north Toronto for an awards ceremony to honour nine award-winning books and authors.

Top fiction prize went to Nora Gold for *Fields of Exile*, her well-crafted, dystopic novel of campus life when anti-Semitism, via an anti-Israel apartheid campaign, rears its persistent ugly head.

In her brief acceptance speech, Gold said she hoped the novel would bring about some positive change in the world, even though "the idea of trying to effect social change through literature is heretical" to literary critics, she observed.

"Maybe I thought the magic of literature could work its magic here and help open some hearts and minds – I hope so still," she said.

Alison Pick won the biography/memoir prize for her memoir *Between Gods*, a moving account of reclaiming her Jewish identity after her family's post-Holocaust conversion to Christianity.

"My ancestors died in Auschwitz and my Judaism was gone," Pick said. "Now, with this book, a new Jewish family was formed."

Other winners included Suri Rosen, who won in the youth literature category for her book *Playing with Matches*; Robyn Sarah, who took the poetry prize for her collection *My Shoes Are Killing Me*; and Ruth Panofsky, who took the Yiddish prize for *The Collected Poems of Miriam Waddington: A Critical Edition*. (Waddington was a lifelong Yiddishist who translated many Yiddish poems into English).

Although described as an inaugural event, the afternoon ceremony felt very much like a seamless continuation of the 27-year-old annual book awards that retired professor Adam Fuerstenberg founded in Toronto in 1988. (An honorary jury member, Fuerstenberg sat at the back of the hall, watching the proceedings like a proud grandparent.)

The Koffler Centre of the Arts took over administration of the awards in recent years, but when the Koffler announced a hiatus – putting the awards "on the shelf," so to speak – several jury members decided to carry on the tradition under new auspices.

Nora Gold at the awards evening.

Jury chair Edward Trapunski thanked the Koffler for its excellent "stewardship" of the awards, but said that jury members were concerned that some books wouldn't get the recognition they deserved if there had been a hiatus.

"If a book comes out in a year when there are no awards, then that book has lost its chance forever," he said.

Host of the resurrected awards is the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York University, whose former director, *CJN* columnist Sara Horowitz, is part of the seven-member book awards jury. The value of prizes given out during the afternoon was "the most ever for any Jewish book awards" in Canada, Trapunski said.

Other prize winners were Joseph Hodes, who won in the history category for his study of the *Bene Israel Jews of India, From India to Israel: Identity, Immigration, and the Struggle for Religious Identity*; Beverley Chalmers, who won in the Holocaust Literature category for *Birth, Sex and Abuse: Women's Voices Under Nazi Rule*; and James A. Diamond, who won in the Scholarship category for *Maimonides and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon*.

Mireille Silcoff took the short fiction prize for her short-story collection *Chez l'Arabe*, partially written at a time when illness caused her to lose her speaking voice. "In truth, my voice had not disappeared but had moved inward into these stories," she said. ■

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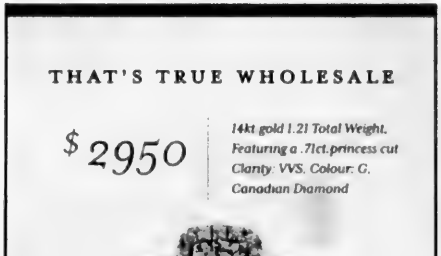

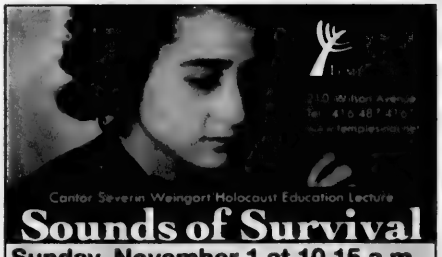
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U.S. diplomat Dennis Ross to highlight Winnipeg festival

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Dennis Ross, left. Omri Barel is one of the bands performing at Tarbut.

Winnipeg's sixth annual Tarbut: Festival of Jewish Culture has scored a major coup in bringing prominent American diplomat Dennis Ross to headline the event, which takes place this year Nov. 14 to 22.

Ross will be in Winnipeg on Nov. 15, to speak about his new book, *Doomed to Succeed: the U.S.-Israeli Relationship from Truman to Obama.*

"We are thrilled to have Ambassador Ross as part of our exciting lineup," says Tamar Barr, Rady JCC's assistant executive director.

"Our Winnipeg audiences have come to expect the best in entertainment at Tarbut, and this year is no exception."

For 12 years, Ross played a leading role in shaping American involvement in the Middle East peace process, Barr notes. He was the point man in negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians for both former presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

Tarbut evolved from the long-standing Jewish Book Fair, which took place at the Asper campus for many years. Six years ago, the Rady JCC – which had long been charged with organizing the weeklong book fair – decided to change the format of the yearly event and expand its mandate. Authors are still featured, and many books and Jewish crafts are still on display, but the program has been enhanced with concerts by Israeli and other performers, comedy, Jewish-themed movies and an exhibit featuring the art of Winnipeg Jewish artists.

Other featured authors are American Nomi Eve, whose latest novel, *Henna House*, portrays the traditions and customs of Yemenite Jewry in mid-20th century; and local authors David Matas, reading from his recent autobiography, and Danita Aziza reading from her latest book, *Finding Home: A Journey of Life Lessons in the Land of Israel.*

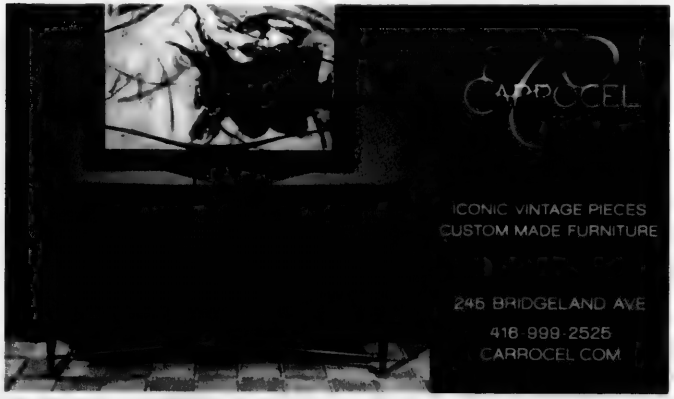
The musical portion of Tarbut kicks off on opening night with popular local bandleader Ron Paley and his band doing a tribute to modern Jewish singer-composers Billy Joel, Neil Diamond, Neil Sedaka, Barry Manilow and Bette Midler.

"We are very excited to also have, from Israel, Baladino, performing Ladino music, and Pharaoh's Daughter," American Basya Schechter and her band playing pieces based on traditional prayers and poems from the liturgy, Barr says.

The films being screened at Tarbut this year are *Hunting Elephants*, an Israeli heist caper comedy starring Patrick Stewart; and *Dough*, a humorous British film about the relationship between an elderly Jewish baker and his assistant, a young Muslim from Darfur in western Sudan.

"Tarbut has become the pre-eminent arts event in the community, garnering more and more attention each and every year," Barr says. "We drew more than 3,200 people last year and expect to better that number this year."

Tarbut also receives funding and support from the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba, the Consulate General of Israel, the Rabbi Rappaport Education and Lecture Series Trust and other local corporate sponsors and private individuals. ■



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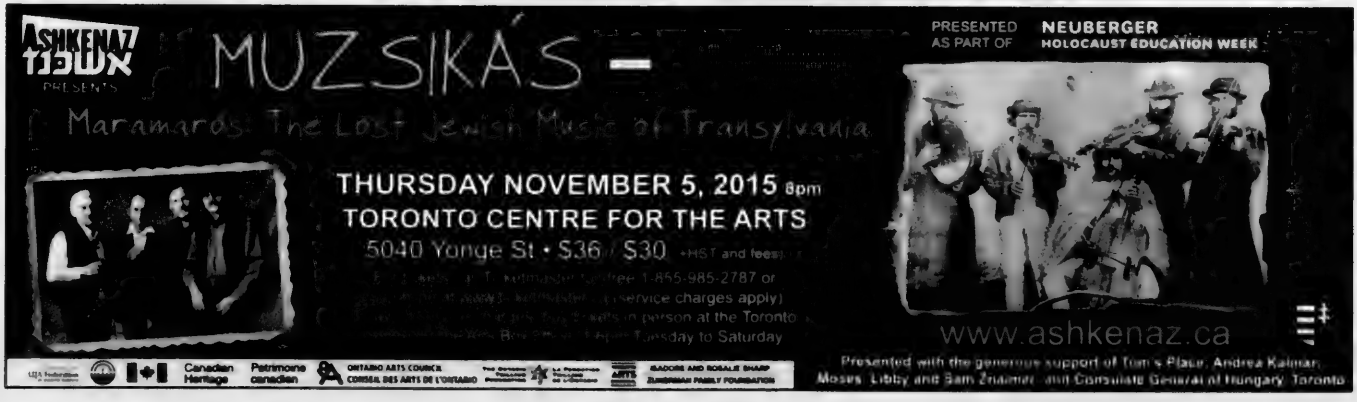
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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 29, 2015

Musical based on true immigrant's story

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

The cast of *The Immigrant* in rehearsal. At right, Kathryn Akin and Steve Gallagher MEREDITH HENRY PHOTOS

Robert McQueen has directed his share of musicals, but he was struck by the unique intimacy of *The Immigrant*, a production he's directing for the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company.

"It's lovely because it's a real sort of chamber musical – which are pretty hard to come by – there's a small cast, a compelling story and it's very simple in form," McQueen said. "When you find them, they're really worth exploring."

Running Oct. 31 to Nov. 22, the musical version of *The Immigrant*, which premiered as an off-Broadway production in 2004, is based on Mark Harelik's 1985 play about a young Jewish immigrant who flees Russia in 1909 and ends up in the small Baptist community of Hamilton, Texas.

McQueen speculated that Harelik pushed to turn the original play into a musical in order to give the material "a second life."

The music is composed by Steven M. Alper, with lyrics by Sarah Knapp and musical direction by Shelley Hanson.

Harelik based the story on the experiences of his grandparents, Haskell and Matleh Harelik, who were the product of what was known as the Galveston Plan. This immigrant assistance program, operated by several Jewish organizations between 1907 and 1914, was set up to divert Jews fleeing Russia and eastern Europe from crowded eastern seaboard cities like New York and Philadelphia and disperse them across the United States.

Though in real life, Haskell and Matleh escaped the pogroms of eastern Europe at the turn of the century and settled in Galveston, Texas; in the fictionalized account, Haskell, the protagonist of the musical, played by Sean Arbuckle, wanders farther afield from Galveston into the interior of Texas.

He reaches Hamilton, a town of just over 1,000 people, and decides to stay.

McQueen noted that the script makes no mention of other Jews coming to live in the town.

In the play – as in real life – Haskell, who starts out as a vendor wielding a banana cart, is taken in by a Texan couple, Milton and Ima Perry, played by Steven Gallagher and Kathryn Akin, who are compelled, out of a sense of Christian charity, to help the stranger, despite their concerns about discovering he is Jewish.

Milton, a banker, cannot help but be moved by Haskell's sense of optimism and a friendship blooms between them as he helps Haskell launch his career.

With his assistance, Haskell advances to operating a horse-drawn fruit cart and eventually to opening a successful department store.

He ultimately brings his wife Leah, played by Tracy Michailidis, over from Russia to join him.

McQueen said the play, which spans a lengthy period, from 1917 until 1943, moves from being a classic immigrant story to focusing on the relationships of and between the two couples.

"At the beginning of the play it's a huge thing for the Texan couple when they realize Haskell is both Russian and Jewish. But it becomes about people discovering commonalities and ways to coexist – to find each other in ways that transcend the things that make us different," McQueen noted.

Based in New York City, McQueen, who is originally from Western Canada, has previously directed plays for Toronto's Acting Up Stage Company, run by artistic and managing director Mitchell Marcus, as well as for the Canadian Opera Company and Vancouver Opera.

He's relished working on *The Immigrant*, as it's given him the opportunity to dive into researching stories of the real Harelik's life, as well as lives of immigrants like him.

"You can find an immigrant story in any family. We've been focusing on revealing the richness of this particular story through these four very strong actors," McQueen said. ■

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Israeli theatre troupe brings its act to Toronto

SHLOMO KAPUSTIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A theatre without a home will bring its first shows to Toronto's Jewish community next month.

"A 'wandering theatre' means we don't have our venue," said Joseph Fackenheim, artistic director of Aspaklaria Jewish Repertory Theatre.

"We'll go to anywhere with a stage, and it doesn't even have to have a stage... Synagogues, community centres, various organizations, as long as they have a venue for us to perform. The way that we're built, we cater to these audiences, to travel, to be adaptable to various places."

The season will begin at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation on Nov. 14, with *Dead End*, which analyzes intergenerational communication via the story of a runaway girl.

Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto in Thornhill has also committed to a show, probably later next month and probably featuring the same play.

Founded in Israel 15 years ago, Aspaklaria is Israel's only repertory or government-supported theatre company exclusively dedicated to Jewish themes and culture. It has produced more than 40 plays over its 15-year history and boasts over 300 performances per year.

In Toronto, it will join a theatre scene that already has the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company and the Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre, which plans to return for the 2016-2017 season after a one-year hiatus. But Aspaklaria's leadership sees its touring model complementing, not threatening, the established players.

Joseph Fackenheim

> *There are a lot of Jewish theatre groups in North America, but a lot of them aren't doing what we do- original plays.*

Talks are underway for performances in other Canadian cities – Montreal and Vancouver are top of mind – and U.S. dates could follow.

For Fackenheim, who has performed with the group for the past six years, the project represents a kind of homecoming. His father, Emil Fackenheim, was the rabbi at Holy Blossom Temple and a professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto. When Joseph was three, the family moved to Israel.

Years later, the family name has triggered memories and opened doors, as Joseph launches Aspaklaria's North America beachhead.

"I had a phone call today from a shul that's interested," he recalled last week. "'Fackenheim' – that name rings a bell. You're not related by any chance to Prof. Emil Fackenheim?"

The theatre aims to bring to North America the Jewish arts mélange that it has developed in Israel.

"There are a lot of Jewish theatre groups in North America," he said, "but a lot of them aren't doing what we do – original plays. They're not so much doing the laboratory aspect of trying to see what happens when you put Jewish culture together with theatre."

Fackenheim also plans to stage *Torn*, about the young son of a prominent Conservative rabbi. Grappling with questions of faith, he ventures downtown one Friday night, and the play follows his journey into the night.

In addition, he said, the theatre will commission new work – on the BDS movement, for example, which advocates boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel.

Askpaklaria's "laboratory" nature also means that it observes Jewish law.

"We looked into the halachic implications," he said, "and we found out that it is okay to learn lines on Shabbat but it's not okay to rehearse, to do anything that involves work. And even me – I don't keep Shabbat, but I don't do anything to do with the theatre on Shabbat, because I respect that. I believe that my word is my bond in this case."

The company's adherence to Jewish law has allowed it to penetrate markets in Israel that rarely experience theatre. Some Orthodox communities, for example, observe a range of restrictions regarding female actors. Aspaklaria addresses this concern by featuring only male performers or, in female-only productions, allowing only women in the audience.

"More liberal streams are also accepting," Fackenheim said, "because the way that we investigate these things, and the new ways to approach old tenets of belief, are very interesting to other streams as well."

He first developed a passion for the arts as a teenager, seeing in them a vehicle to explore life's deepest questions.

"I have a complicated relationship with [Jewish tradition] personally," he said, "and I think the best way for me to examine my connection with my beliefs, my culture, is through this, on stage with other artists and my audience."

About 50 years ago, his father became famous by formulating the so-called 614th commandment: not to hand Hitler "posthumous victories" by abandoning Jewish heritage.

Asked if Aspaklaria satisfies his father's dictate, Fackenheim fils gave a long, knowing laugh: "I believe so, it is fair to say that."■

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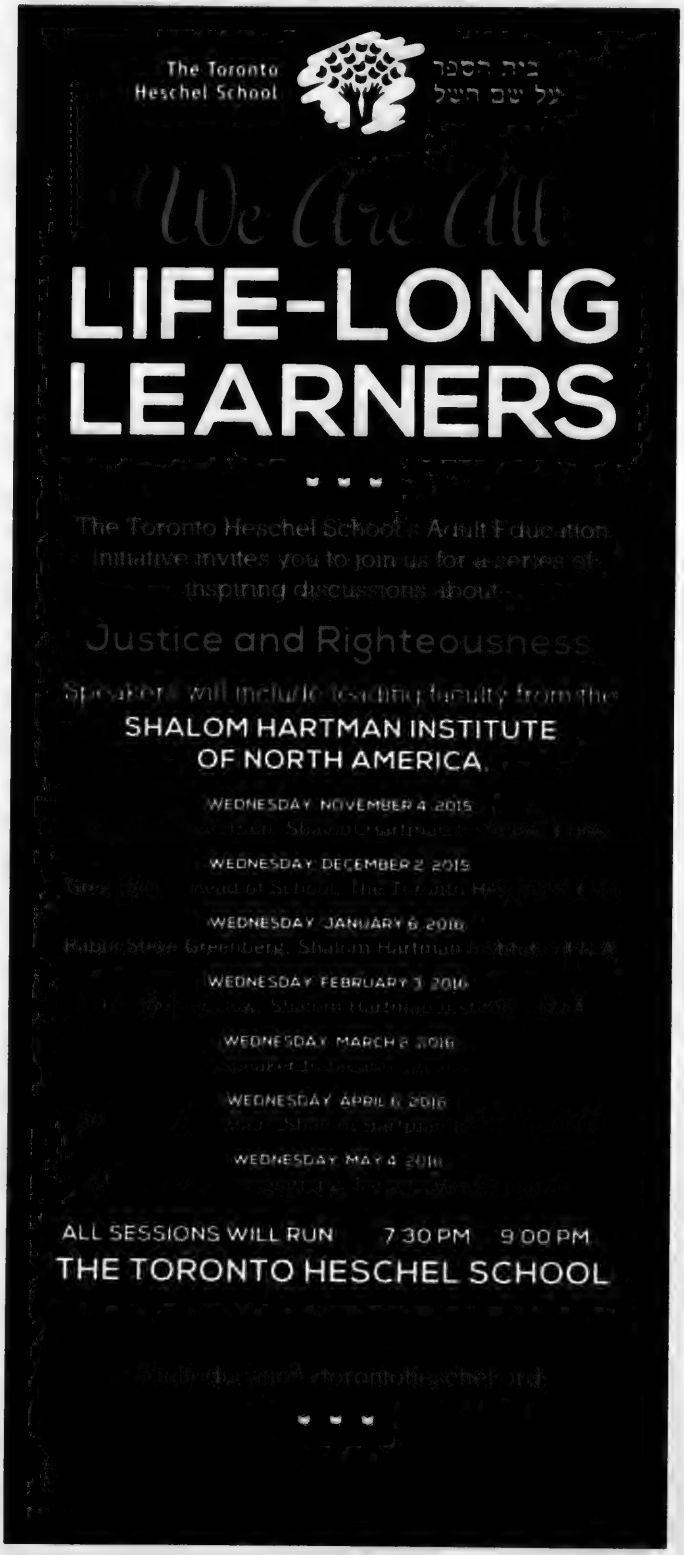
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WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 4 2015
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WEDNESDAY MARCH 2 2016
WEDNESDAY APRIL 6 2016
WEDNESDAY MAY 4 2016
ALL SESSIONS WILL RUN 7:30 PM 9:00 PM
THE TORONTO HESCHEL SCHOOL

Israeli tennis coach and Jewish player lead Canada

MARVIN GLASSMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Canadian Junior Davis Cup winning team members are (from left) Denis Shapovalov, Felix Auger-Aliassime, captain/coach Oded Jacob and Benjamin Sigouin.

There was definitely an Israeli touch to Canada winning its historic first Junior Davis Cup in tennis for boys 16 and under on Oct. 4 in Spain.

Led by 16-year-old Denis Shapovalov of Richmond Hill, Ont. who was born in Tel Aviv, and Canadian Junior Davis Cup captain/coach Oded Jacob, an Israeli who formerly worked with the Israel Tennis Association, Canada, went undefeated in teams from Colombia, Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong and Poland in a round robin competition to win its first Junior Davis Cup.

Shapovalov shined in the final tie against Germany. The tall 5-foot 10 in. lefthander defeated German Marvin Moeller 6-1, 6-4 to give Canada a 1-0 lead. After Canadian teammate Felix Auger-Aliassime lost his match to even the tie, the two Canadian boys teamed in doubles in the final match to emerge victorious with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 win over the German duo of Nicola Kuhn and Moeller.

"It's very exciting being the first Canadians ever to win Junior Davis Cup," said a jubilant Shapovalov, ranked 29th among the world's top juniors, following the historic win.

"Being the top seed, I am proud of what our boys accomplished. The competition was fierce over the six-day competition and I am glad to be part of the historical win for Canada," said Jacob, who was hired by Tennis Canada in 2011 to develop top Canadian junior players based in Vancouver.

Players from 47 nations took part in the regional competition in 2015 leading to the top 16 teams competing in the final week in Spain.

Many of the top professional players, such as Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, competed in Junior Davis Cup when they were teens.

"Our victory shows how far Canada has come in tennis. Canadians are no longer just talented in hockey and figure skating. We have an impressive tennis system in place that other nations wish to emulate," said Jacob.

Tennis Canada feels that hiring Jacob was one of the best moves made to develop promising Canadian tennis players in Western Canada.

"We are fortunate to have hired one of the best coaches in the world to identify talented youngsters in tennis", said Ryan Clark, chief executive of Tennis BC in Vancouver, who selected Jacob over other top candidates available.

Jacob has been held in high esteem in tennis circles for his stellar achievements in Israel. He nurtured Israeli tennis players Shahar Peer, Dudi Sela and Harel Levy from their teens into top world class players over the past 15 years.

Jacob was instrumental in achieving several high milestones for Israel. Two players he developed – Peer and Sela – led Israel to a World Group Fed Cup berth in 2008, and the 2009 Davis Cup semi-finals respectively.

Ironically enough, Jacob may again be taking an Israeli born tennis player, albeit now a Canadian, and help Shapovalov become a top tennis player.

Shapovalov has already produced an impressive resumé. He teamed with Auger-Aliassime to win the 2015 U.S. Open Junior doubles championship. Last April as a 15-year-old, Shapovalov won the Rogers Canadian national tennis championship. He was also named by Tennis Canada as the 2014 Junior Tennis Player Of The Year.

Shapovalov has joined Canadians Milos Raonic and Vasek Pospisil as winners of the prestigious national junior championship.

Winning the national junior title does not mean that Shapovalov is guaranteed to be a top tennis star for Canada on the pro circuit in a few years.

"At age 15, Milos Raonic was not the top Canadian as he is now. So, you never hope how good a young player can be on the pro circuit," said Jacob.

Shapovalov's parents are Russian Jews who emigrated to Israel before emigrating again to Toronto in 2004.

He credits his mother Tessa, who coached young Denis at five years old, for his love of tennis.

"She even opened up her own tennis club (Tessatennis) in Vaughan to give me a base to train in tennis," said Shapovalov.

Although he would probably earn a scholarship to an American university with a tennis program, Shapovalov is thinking of bypassing college to turn pro.

"My dream has always been to be a top tennis player and winning Grand Slam tournaments, so I probably won't go to college," said Shapovalov. ■

The Socialite

Tom Koffler, Anna Koffler, Mark Liss, Sharon London Liss, Marc Boyman and Tiana Koffler Boyman

Mel and Pedie Wolfond

John Caruana, Isabel Rocamora, Mark Cauchi and Chris Irwin

Lisa and Chad Wolfond

Marie Noelle Swiderski and Kim Smiley

Robert Davidovitz and Darcie Kennedy

Art! Food for the soul

Recently, patrons of the Koffler Gallery were treated to the first solo show in Canada of British-Spanish artist filmmaker Isabel Rocamora. Rocamora's latest work, a three channel film called *Faith (2015)*, contemplates the conflict among the three dominant religions in Jerusalem, seeking a common ground in the gesture of prayer and its essential humanity.

Meanwhile, the Lonsdale Gallery had a reception for artist Pedie Wolfond. In her exhibit, *Whiteout*, Wolfond begins with a carefully planned and colourful painting, then applies thin and thick layers of white paint igniting a new gesture which highlights moments of focused energy, an indulgence for the eyes and the soul. ■

– *The Socialite*

Michael Schwartz and Tara Fainstein

Florence and Syd Cooper

Olga Korper, Isabel Rocamora and Magda González-Mora

Patrons at the Koffler Gallery

PHOTOS ON LEFT SIDE: MICHAEL KLAR (LONSDALE GALLERY) AND RIGHT SIDE: JORJAS PHOTOGRAPHY (KOFFLER CENTRE OF THE ARTS)

The Socialite wants your photos.
Email thesocialite@thecjn.ca for submission details.

What's New

OCT. 29 - NOV.5

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Oct. 29

BOOK CLUB
Sherry Gluck discusses *All the Light We Cannot See*, Temple Har Zion, 8 p.m.

GALA CONCERT
Cantor Aaron Bensoussan and friends perform for Beth Emeth Synagogue's 60th anniversary, 7:30 p.m. $36. 416-633-3838.

FRUMBA
Pride of Israel Synagogue offers women's cardio dance fitness classes, noon. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

Friday, Oct. 30

ADULT EDUCATION
Michael Mostyn, CEO of B'nai Brith Canada, discusses the organization's new direction, Temple Har Zion, 8 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 1

ISLAM AND JUDAISM
Prof. Liyakat Takim, discusses "Islam and Judaism: Interactions in Scripture, Ritual and History," 11 a.m., First Narayever Congregation.

SOUNDS OF SURVIVAL
A five-piece women's orchestra performs pieces played by the Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz, 10:15 a.m., Temple Sinai.

REMEMBERING WIERZBNIK
The annual memorial meeting commemorating the destruction of Wierzbnik will be held at 2 p.m. at Bialik Hebrew School, 2760 Bathurst St. **Steven Jacobs** will discuss "Justice or revenge: rethinking the dark side of liberation." **Reva** 905-763-2709.

THE MAGIC OF ORION
Shaar Shalom's Inter-Synagogue Singles (50+) presents an evening of magic and mind reading with **Ryan Neary,** 7:30 p.m.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Nov. 12 is Nov. 2. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

MOLLY ROTHMAN PHOTO

Happy birthday!

Members of Club Rimon of Na'amat Canada Toronto recently celebrated the chapter's bat mitzvah, its 13th year of belonging to and supporting the humanitarian work of Na'amat Israel, by collecting good used clothing, which they and their children sorted and donated to Jewish Family and Child.

Monday, Nov. 2

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Carolyn Harris discusses "Magna Carta and its gifts to Canada: democracy, law and human rights," 2 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $15/ lecture. 416-449-3880.

BOOK REVIEW
Tina Urman discusses *The Lady in Gold: The Extraordinary Tale of Gustav Klimt's Masterpiece*, lunch at 1 p.m.; review at 1:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. $90/$110 series; $25 at the door. RSVP 416-781-3511.

MEDICAL ETHICS
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "Medicine and minors: who decides?" 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. www.torontotorah.com

BEGINNER'S MAH-JONG
Free classes start at Beth Emeth Synagogue, 10 a.m. Register at 416-633-3838.

Tuesday, Nov. 3

LUNCHING AND LEARNING
Doris Bergen discusses "Liberation: aftermath and rebirth," Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

Don Schwartz discusses "Who is Vladimir Putin?" noon, Beth Sholom Synagogue. $18. RSVP 416-783-6103.

The York Jazz Band performs at National Council of Jewish Women's lunch program, noon, 4700 Bathurst St. $9. RSVP 416-633-5100.

JOYS OF JEWISH MUSIC
Jordan Klapman presents "From klezmer to the American songbook," 1:30 p.m. Beth Tzedec Congregation. Free. RSVP 416-781-3511.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE
Menachem Rosensaft discusses "The transfer of memory: the future of Holocaust remembrance," 7:30 p.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue.

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism shows the film *Mum* by **Julia Creet,** 7:30 p.m., 18 Wynford Dr.

COUNTER-MISSIONARY SEMINAR
Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "The Real Messiah, Part 2," 8 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. Free. 416-789-0020.

Wednesday, Nov. 4

BIBLICAL DAY TRIPS
Hana Werner discusses "Miriam: A sister, prophet and gatekeeper," 1:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. $10. RSVP 416-781-3511.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Maurice Switzer discusses "Indigenous and Jewish experiences: change and continuity," 7 p.m., William Doo Auditorium, University of Toronto, 45 Willcocks St.

AUTHOR READING
Susan Glickman reads from her fiction about the Holocaust, as part of the Wonderful Women Writers series, hosted by **Nora Gold.** Also reading are **Safia Fazlul** and **Andrea Thompson,** 5:15 p.m., OISE/University of Toronto, 252 Bloor St. W. Free.

DEEPENING JEWISH EXPERIENCE
Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "Jewish prayer and meditation: connecting with God," 8 p.m., Temmy Latner Forest Hill Jewish Centre, 446 Spadina Rd. 416-789-0020.

Thursday, Nov. 5

NASH AND DRASH
Beth Emeth Synagogue presents "Nash and Drash" with **Rabbi Howard Morrison,** noon. $13. RSVP 416-633-3838.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Adara Goldberg discusses ""Holocaust survivors in Canada: exclusion, inclusion, transformation," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

Hilary Earl discusses "From perpetrators of genocide to ordinary German citizens: the reintegration of Nazi war criminals into German society," 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

OPERA FROM A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

Jerry Fink discusses "Opera from a Jewish perspective," today and Nov. 12, 11 a.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $10/$15.

YIDDISH VINKL

Anne Dublin discusses her new book *44 Hours or Strike*, noon, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers needed to distribute poppies in the Bathurst Street and St. Clair Avenue area for the Royal Canadian Legion General Wingate Branch. Email sgs823@sympatico.ca

Volunteers needed to deliver kosher meals on wheels for Circle of Care. Call 416-635-2900, ext. 375 or email afoss@circleofcare.com

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- **Mind body connection for women:** An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Oct. 29 at 7 p.m.
- **Parenting the child/teen with ADHD:** A 4-week group for parents of children diagnosed with ADHD. Oct. 29, 7 p.m.
- **Separation 101:** A 1-session workshop for adults in the process of separating from their spouse. Oct. 29, 7 p.m.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Oct. 29, **Renate Krakauer** discusses her new novel, *Only by Blood*, 1:30 p.m.; Nov. 5, book club discusses *The Glass Room*, by **Simon Mawer,** 11 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or email lisar@mnjcc.org.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9; Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.; exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Nov. 3, **Gerald Ziedenberg** discusses "A history of modern Russia – part 3," 10 a.m.; Nov. 5, lecture on "Healing the body with Reiki," 1:30 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; live entertainment Nov. 18, 2 p.m.; barber Nov. 5, 10 a.m.
- **Association of Jewish Seniors:** Home fire safety with **Denise Hynes,** Nov. 19, 9:30 a.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. RSVP 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **National Council of Jewish Women-Aviva Chapter** is looking for senior women who would like to join, 416-633-5100.
- **Seniors health and wellness fair,** Nov. 5, Thornhill Community Centre, 7755 Bayview Ave. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. 416-256-1892.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Judi 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Free mah-jong class starts Nov. 2, 10 a.m. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion.** Wednesdays, play bridge at 9:30 a.m.; mah-jong at 1 p.m.; Scrabble first and third Wednesday of the month. Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge, mah-jong and canasta, Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- Mini-memoir legacy writing workshop with **Liz Pearl,** starts Oct. 29, 1 p.m.
- Screening of *24 Days*, Nov. 22, 7 p.m.
- "A Taste of Jazz," presented by the Royal Conservatory of Music, Nov. 3-17, 1 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Van Gogh and Gauguin, Friendship, rivalry and tragedy," Nov. 17- Dec.1, 1 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "A look at Jewish comedy in movies," Nov. 4-25, 1 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- **Elliot Sylman's** photos of Holocaust survivors are in the gallery Oct. 31-Nov. 26.
- The gallery is looking for an Israeli visual artist for March 2016. Submissions close Nov. 1. Email deannad@mnjcc.org
- Fall supper club for young adults with developmental disabilities, Wednesdays until Nov. 18, 4 -8:30 p.m. Ext. 330.
- Hebrew-language discussion group about parenting, Nov. 4-Dec. 2, 8 p.m.
- Reading of *A View from the Roof*, with playwright **Dave Carley,** a Holocaust Education Week program, Nov. 5, 1:30 p.m.
- **Tamar Levy** discusses parenting, Nov. 5, 8 p.m. (Hebrew).
- 9-week photography project for youth 18-30 who are disabled with artist **Maayan Ziv,** Sundays, Nov. 8-Jan.24, 3-5 p.m.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Wunderkinder*, with guest speaker **Bernice Eisenstein,** Nov. 8, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Tickets go on sale one hour before show time.
- *State of Women* is at the Al Green Theatre, Nov. 11-16, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities. Ongoing to Dec. 6, 1 p.m. Ext. 330.
- Shabbat family party, spaces still available, Fridays, 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Ext. 388.
- Fitness: Inclusive run club, starts Nov. 7 at noon.
- Wheel dance: learn Latin dance in a mixed abilities class. Sundays to Dec. 6, 6 p.m. Ext. 330.
- From tummies to mummies: postnatal spin class, Mondays 10:30 a.m. Ext. 567.
- Open community choir, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. with **Gillian Stecyk**.
- Everyday Friends: social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Ext. 330.
- **Iain Scott** discusses "Four of the greatest scenes from opera," Mondays starting Nov. 2, 1:30 p.m.
- Support group for adult children of Holocaust survivors starts Oct. 29. Call **Shoshana Yaakobi** 416-785-2500, ext. 2271
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

- "Is your child a picky eater?" will be discussed Nov. 11, 7 p.m.
- Asian cooking workshop, Nov. 3, 1 p.m.
- Create a silk cover, Nov. 5- 26, 7 p.m.
- Intermediate mah-jong starts Nov. 24, 10:30 a.m.
- Screening of *Above and Beyond*, Nov. 8, 7 p.m. ■

Visit our new website
www.cjnews.com

ASK ELLA

When should a first date progress to a second?

Ella Burakowski
eb@thecjn.ca

Dear Ella,

I hate first dates, and I've had quite a few lately. What's with all the shtick men have now? The first guy seemed normal online and on the phone. We went for dinner and everything was going well, until he reached over and picked up a bunch of fries off my plate. The next guy barely took his eyes off his phone as his annoying text message alert kept interrupting our conversation. I couldn't help feel the texts were about me. The third guy was clearly not over his ex and couldn't stop discussing what a bitch she was. All deal-breakers in my book.

Isn't there anyone left out there that's normal! I'm so frustrated I could scream. How am I ever going to meet Mr. Right?

Hates Dating

Dear Hates Dating,

Dating is all about the risks and the rewards. You have no choice but to put yourself out there in order to progress that first date into a second one.

The first impression someone makes may not convey who they really are as a potential partner. You're meeting a superficial being on the first date, someone who might be nervous, trying to put forward a specific persona, or trying too hard to impress you. On the other hand, he may truly be a jerk and not dating for the same reasons you are.

Time to put your Sherlock hat on and follow your instincts. It's not easy, and you have to be smart.

Here are some questions to ask yourself to determine if that first date should turn into a second.

First and foremost, do you feel safe, not only physically, but emotionally? Is he well-mannered, not putting you down or making you feel inadequate? Do you have anything in common? Does he possess any of the qualities from your short list? Are you bored? Are you enjoying yourself, or is the date a chore? Is your conversation easy or strained? Catching him in a lie is also a huge red flag. Trust your instincts.

Even if he did or said something annoying, if he passes most of the questions I mentioned, give a second date a try. Give yourselves a chance to let your hair down and get to know each other with the first date jitters and awkwardness out of the way. It only takes one to make it all the way to being that Mr. Right.

Dear Ella,

I recently met a sweet fellow at a party. He asked me out on a date, and I happily accepted. We were out for a walk after a lovely dinner, and he mentioned he would prefer to date women who have children. He is recently divorced and has two daughters 12 and 15.

At first I just thought it was an odd thing to say, but he explained that he didn't feel a woman who has never raised children would understand that he has to put his kids first. I don't have kids, and therefore don't meet his criteria, but I like this guy and his values. Do you think I should bother trying to pursue him, and change his mind?

Kidless & Single

Dear Kidless & Single,

I think on the surface, this fellow is admirable. First, his priority is his daughters, which tells me he is a hands-on dad. Second, he is being honest with you from the start, also an commendable trait.

The question then turns to you. Are you comfortable taking second place in this relationship right from the start? He is telling you that you will never be No. 1. Can you handle that? Is that what you want?

I think what he really needs is time to adjust to his new lifestyle and experience what it's like to be in the dating world again. He needs to stop being judgmental if he wants to succeed. Being a mother is not the only criteria that makes a woman understanding. There are plenty of divorced mothers who are ready to be No. 1 one in their man's life, and there are plenty of single childless women, who may even want to get to know his kids and be part of their lives.

Although this guy may have his priorities straight, his narrow-minded views tell me he's not ready for the dating scene yet. He has growing and learning to do. Are you sure you want to be the one to teach it to him? ■

Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

Mazel Tov!

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Mazel tov Frank & Irene Freedman on their 60th anniversary, Nov. 6. All our love from your children, grandchildren. Enjoy many more happy, healthy years.

Mazel tov to Ray Pasternak and Harry Haber, who were recently honoured by The Canadian Hebrew Benevolent Society Lodge (CHBS) for 50 years of service.

Happy fourth birthday, Brooke Dana, daughter of Neil & Liz Rosenberg. Love, Bubbie Rhona Rosenberg, Laval, Sigmund and Barbara Stritzs.

Mazel tov! Happy 50th anniversary to Emile & Barbara Aufgang! Best wishes from your children and grandchildren. We all love you so much!

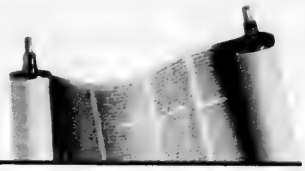
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Parshah

Vayera | Genesis 18:1-22:24



Rabbi Ilan Acoca says the Torah's ideals can help us regain our humility
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl explains the importance of welcoming guests
Rabbi Catharine Clark offers lessons from the classic story of the binding of Isaac

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

Rabbi Meir Simcha Hacohen explains that there is absolute good and good that would only be considered good in relationship to evil. Abraham, the pillar of kindness, requested of HaShem that even if there could only be found 50 people in Sodom who would be considered righteous when compared to the rest of the evil city, their merit should save everyone else.

This concept is important to remember in two instances. If you are very idealistic and a perfectionist and, therefore, feel like a failure because you are not on the high level you wish you were on, remember that in relation to the majority of the world, you are probably righteous. This will prevent you from becoming discouraged. But if you look around and see that other people are on such a low level that you begin to feel arrogant, focus on where you stand in absolute terms. When you view your present state in relation to the highest Torah ideals, you will be able to regain feelings of humility.

As human beings, we often think we have the answers to many of the world's issues. However, we have to ask ourselves, are we really in control? On the other hand, our rabbis order us to take a stand and not to be apathetic.

The challenge we have is to find a fine balance between these two extremes.

How do we do that?

When I am in that situation, I turn to God for guidance, and since God has all the answers, He guides me.

Let us all open our vessel which is the soul that God gave us. By doing so, God will be able to penetrate, show us the way and give us the answers we are looking for. ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

Something remarkable yet ordinary occurs at the beginning of this Torah portion. Initially, we are told, "HaShem appeared to [Abraham] by the oak trees of Mamre. He was sitting at the entrance of the tent as the day grew hot." Then the Torah reports, "Looking up, [Abraham] saw three men standing near him." (Genesis 18.1-2). First God appears, then there are three visitors. What happened to God?

James Kugel suggests that this is a "moment of confusion," when God morphs into three men.

Later – after the meal of hospitality, after the news about the future son and after Sarah has laughed – God is present again to ask, "Why did Sarah laugh?"

Sarah is frightened, because in a "moment of recognition," she has figured out with whom she is speaking. Kugel theorises that the Bible experienced the proximity of divine and human not as remarkable, but as an ordinary occurrence. God and humanity were not so distinct as they are today – the curtain that divides us would occasionally be pulled aside.

The Torah continues: "As soon as [Abraham] saw them, he *ran* from the entrance of the tent to greet them and, bowing to the ground, he said, 'My lords, if it please you, do not go on past your servant. Let a little water be brought. Bathe your feet and recline under the tree. Let me fetch you a morsel of bread to refresh yourselves, then go on…'"

Reading these words, a midrash imagines something quite notable: Abraham *runs* from God to the visitors. From this, we learn that "welcoming guests is more important that welcoming the Presence of God." Rabbi Shai Held proposes that this remarkable act has ordinary implications. If human beings are the icons of the divine, made "in the image of God," then by welcoming people, we also recognize and honour God. ■

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is the Anne and Max Tanenbaum senior rabbi of Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Rabbi Catharine Clark

The Binding of Isaac is a haunting story made all the more terrifying by an echo of its beginning at the end of the tale.

The story begins with God calling to Abraham by his name, "Abraham!" Once he has Abraham's attention, God continues with the horrible command that Abraham sacrifice his beloved son Isaac.

At the end of the story, when Abraham's knife is extended over his bound son, Abraham is called again by his name. This time, an angel of the Lord is the speaker, and he calls the name twice, "Abraham! Abraham!"

For centuries, commentators have asked why Abraham was called once to sacrifice his son but twice to halt his hand. Rashi gives the most comforting of answers. Calling Abraham's name two times is the language of endearment, as if the angel had said, "Abraham, sweetie!" To Rashi, it is as if God knew what horror Abraham had suffered and was consoling him. Ibn Ezra sees the action at Mount Moriah proceeding quickly. The angel calls Abraham's name twice because he is frantic to stop him before it is too late.

The Haketav Vehakabbalah, a 19th-century German commentary, envisions Abraham in a way that shocks most modern Jews. To him, Abraham is so intent on fulfilling the word of his Creator that Abraham could not hear the angel at first. The angel had to call Abraham's name a second time to distract the patriarch from what Abraham felt was the sacred task of killing Isaac.

Our reaction to the Haketav Vehakabbalah's interpretation reminds us that our paths – even those that may seem God-given – may not be as righteous as we think. Before acting too intently, we should listen to hear if our name is being called a second time. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is the spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom, a Conservative synagogue in London, Ont.

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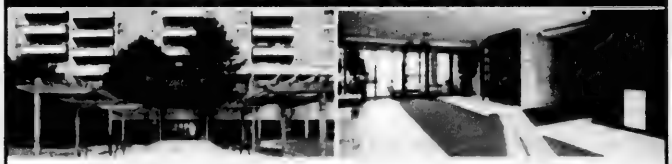

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For something different, add fresh figs

SUE EPSTEIN
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Plump, soft and sweet, fresh figs are gorgeous in salads, desserts or simply enjoyed on their own.

Here is a simple chicken salad, for example. Give it a Mediterranean flavour by tossing in fresh figs, and since the salad's ingredients include yogurt (non-dairy), mint and chickpeas, too, the finished dish can seem positively Greek.

Also, remember that after the fresh fig season, you can still make these dishes with dried figs.

Fig and pistachio couscous

- ❑ 1 1/2 tbsp. olive oil
- ❑ 1 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1 box (10 oz.) couscous
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups figs, thinly sliced
- ❑ 1 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. ground allspice
- ❑ 1/2 cup shelled pistachios, chopped
- ❑ 1/4 cup chopped green onions
- ❑ 1/4 cup thinly sliced fresh basil

Combine 2 1/4 cups water, oil and salt in medium saucepan; bring to boil. Remove from heat; stir in couscous, figs, and spices. Cover; let stand until water is absorbed, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and fluff with fork. Cool completely. Stir in nuts, green onions and basil. Makes about 7 cups.

Greek-style chicken fig salad

- ❑ 1/4 cup orange juice
- ❑ 1 tbsp. plain tofu yogurt
- ❑ 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- ❑ 1 garlic clove, crushed with a garlic press
- ❑ 1/2 tbsp. Dijon mustard
- ❑ pepper, to taste
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. olive oil
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups cooked, diced chicken breast
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups canned chickpeas, rinsed ❑ and drained
- ❑ 1/2 cucumber, peeled and sliced 1/4-in.thick
- ❑ 1/2 small red onion, finely chopped
- ❑ 3/4 cup (about 10) fresh figs, diced
- ❑ 3 cups mixed salad greens
- ❑ 6 tbsp. chopped fresh mint

In a large bowl, whisk together the orange juice, yogurt, lemon juice, garlic, mustard and pepper. Whisk in the olive oil until well blended. Add the chicken, chickpeas, cucumber, onion and figs; stir and toss to coat well (see note). Store in refrigerator until ready to serve.

To serve, divide the salad greens among 6 individual plates. Top each with an equal amount of the chicken mixture. Sprinkle with the mint.

Note: The recipe makes enough dressing to lightly coat the salad ingredients. If you prefer a heavier coating, you may double the dressing amounts. Makes 6 servings (8 cups).

Fig raisin spice loaf

Fresh figs and raisins shine in this delicious spice loaf made in a loaf pan. You can also bake it in an 8- or 9-in. square pan or as muffins. Reduce the baking time accordingly. This goes together fast and is great source of fibre. Try it toasted for breakfast. The glaze is optional.

- ❑ 1 cup chopped fresh figs (may substitute 1/2 cup chopped dried figs)
- ❑ 1 cup raisins
- ❑ 1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- ❑ 2 tsp. baking powder
- ❑ 2 tsp. cinnamon
- ❑ 3/4 tsp. fresh-grated nutmeg
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. allspice
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/2 cup solid shortening (may substitute an equal amount of butter or margarine)
- ❑ 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- ❑ 2 eggs, beaten
- ❑ 1/2 cup sour cream
- ❑ 1/2 cup milk

Optional Glaze:
- ❑ 1 cup powdered confectioners' sugar

heavy cream or milk

Preheat oven to 375. Grease a standard loaf pan. Cover figs and raisins with boiling water and let sit to plump for 15 minutes. Drain thoroughly and pat dry with paper towels. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, and salt. Set aside.

In a large bowl, cream shortening and brown sugar together until it resembles clumpy wet sand. Beat in eggs, sour cream and milk. Add flour mixture, half at a time, to the wet ingredients. Blend until smooth and combined. Batter will be thick. Fold in figs and raisins by hand. Pour into prepared pan and bake about 1 hour, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let cool to room temperature before slicing to serve.

Optional Glaze: Add heavy cream or milk to powdered sugar a little at a time, just until it reaches a spreadable consistency. Spread or drizzle on top of cooled loaf. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
OCTOBER 29, 2015

Gary Kenzer: bias battle can be won on social media

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Gary Kenzer is the national executive director of Honest Reporting USA, a Chicago-based group that monitors Israel's coverage in the international media and works to highlight and challenge what the organization deems biased or unfair coverage.

Kenzer was in Toronto Oct. 14 to speak at Adath Israel Congregation about issues pertaining to Israel's portrayal in the media.

Was the speaking event at Adath Israel planned because of the recent spike in violence between Israelis and Palestinians?

No, the event was planned back in May or so. But Israel's coverage in the media can be a relevant topic pretty much at any time. This media war that's going on now – and it is a war, one declared on the battlefront of the media – I'm not sure that we who stand with Israel are doing well. I think that groups like us and StandWithUs [a non-profit, pro-Israel education and advocacy organization] are doing great stuff, and our website has been exploding with people visiting it. But what's missing is the pro-Israel masses really participating in the way communication gets out today, which is through social media. We need to jump more on the bandwagon and get the message out.

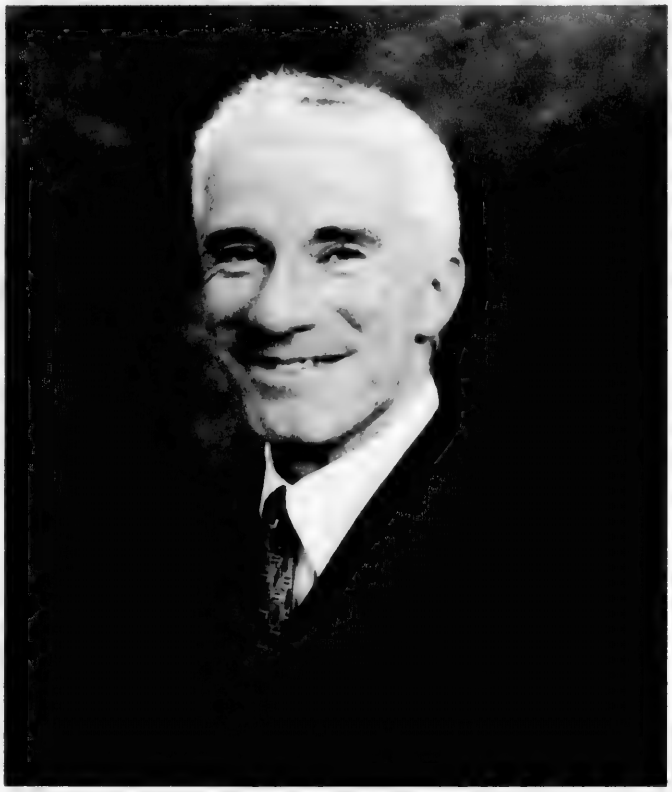
What would you like to see people in this camp doing?

One of the things I talked about at the event was the importance of getting more people on board with positively portraying Israel in social media. I'm amazed at how many people don't understand how easy it is to get the message out to the masses that way. We can't assume the power of social media is lost in this war.

Honest Reporting also has this campaign going now called Israeli Lives Matter, which is a take on Black Lives Matter. We're demanding that the BBC report accurately when Palestinian terrorists murder Israelis. We're trying to get 20,000 or more signatures. People can post about that on social media.

Also, we want people to talk about the issue. Don't keep it a secret. People are feeling overwhelmed by the negative information that's out there about Israel and feel it's not something we can overcome. But if that's the perception, then we're going to lose this battle.

It's dark days right now – there's been a lot of bloodshed. But as our organization's CEO said, we're not going to apologize for the lack of loss of life on the Israeli side.



Gary Kenzer is national executive director of Honest Reporting USA

> *We want people to talk about the issue. Don't keep it a secret.*

Why should we apologize for the fact there's more dead on one side than the other?

Do you believe that the mainstream media in North America are anti-Israel?

Stuff we post on our website comes from all over the world, so if there's bias out there anywhere, it can go viral and become our problem.

The anti-Israel media bias might not be as bad in the United States or Canada, but that doesn't mean it won't be just as bad for, say, the Jewish community in Toronto if there are negative messages about Israel coming from media in South Africa.

But are Canadian and American newspapers generally anti-Israel, in your view?

Yes. I won't say the press is as godawfully bad as it was 10 years ago, but I think a lot of the media have been nudged along by the politics of the country.

There are people who argue that the North American media are actually quite pro-Israel, while the Israeli media are more nuanced in showing both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. How do you respond to that?

I'm concerned about people in North America reading the news about Israel from Israeli news sources online, because it tends to be very political. You'll read the same story written very differently in a paper to the left from a paper to the right. And if you don't understand the political nuance of Israeli life, you're not going to understand what you're reading.

Does Honest Reporting monitor news sources from the Arab world?

Right now we monitor a little over 1,500 newspapers every day. We have people working as translators from our media facility in Jerusalem.

What sorts of things are you seeing in the Arab press regarding the recent surge of violence in Israel and the Palestinian territories?

We're finding that the violence going on right now is being endorsed.

Unfortunately, you don't find a whole lot of news sources out there in the Arab world condemning this violence against Israeli Jews or saying it's wrong. We're finding just the opposite. It's very vile.

My concern is that more than ever people are taking stuff about Israel at face value, and you can't do that, because then we're going to lose the battle.

This is no small battle, especially because no one on the Palestinian side seems to be taking responsibility for the violence – not Hamas, not Hezbollah, not the Palestinian Authority. I think there's a lot of this lone wolf stuff and that's what's doing damage and seems to be driving this momentum.

I think all of this anti-Israel messaging in the media is not overwhelming if we take it one piece at a time and take the other side of story and share it. That's why organizations like ours are so important, because we dig for the other side of the story. Then at least, if people can make their mind up based on complete information.

Do you see a risk in news stories having too much of a pro-Israel slant?

If it slides to the other side because people are getting both sides of the story, so be it. If that happens, at least people will be making decisions based upon a complete set of information.

All we want is for the truth to set the record straight. We want people to realize that Israel's not a perfect country and that it should be treated the same as any country in the world expects to be treated, which is innocent until proven guilty, and not the other way around. ■

This interview was edited and condensed for style and clarity.

The gambling rabbi

Backstory

RABBI YIRMIYA MILEVSKY
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In our era of media sensationalism very few things get more coverage than scandalous conduct by men of the cloth. Unfortunately, over the past few years individuals with the title "Rabbi" have made their way into the headlines for a whole list of vices. Although the recent accounts are quite unseemly for a member of the clergy, rabbinic moral weaknesses is unfortunately nothing new.

Among the more fascinating Jewish personalities to emerge from the Renaissance was a rabbi by the name of Leon De Modena of Venice (1571–1648). At the age of 13, he was recognized as a prodigy, after penning a poem entitled *Kina Sh'mor* that made sense whether it was read in Italian or in Hebrew.

Despite his great talents, Rabbi Modena struggled to find a steady source of income. Over the years, he found employment as a Hebrew and rabbinics teacher, a proofreader and author of Hebrew tombstone epitaphs. In one of his works, he listed 26 occupations to which he resorted from time to time. Today, he is known among scholars of the Kabbalah for a work titled *Ari Nohem*, in which he asserted that the "Bible of the Kabbalists," the Zohar, a text attributed to the second-century Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, was actually the work of a 13th-century Spanish rabbi and Kabbalist named Moses de León.

Despite all of his talent, scholarship and knowledge, Rabbi Modena had a weakness: he had an addiction to games of chance. It seems that his first taste of the game came on Chanukah, when many spend their leisure time wagering on the four-sided spinning top known as the dreidl, and on cards. Rabbi Modena himself reported that "During Chanukah [1598] Satan duped me into playing games of chance, and by the following Shavuot [May 30-31, 1599], I lost more than 300 ducats."

Although his weakness was well known, he was respected by the majority of the community. Some scholars, however, were unhappy with him for his views and behaviour. A specific rabbi attempted to ridicule Rabbi Modena's scholarship by stating that "Modena has made more money in gambling than by selling his works." Rabbi Modena responded to the charge by noting that "unfortunately the truth is I have lost a lot in the gambling while my books have brought in a profit."

> *Despite all of his talent, scholarship and knowledge, Rabbi Modena had a weakness: he had an addiction to games of chance*

Years ago, I would participate at times in a service called the "Yom Kippur Katan" – the "Minor Yom Kippur." This service, which is performed the day before Rosh Chodesh, the "New Moon," includes penitential poems and prayers, and by some is treated as day of fasting, repentance and supplication with resemblance to the day of Yom Kippur. The custom originated among the Safed Kabbalists in the 16th century.

In one of the poems, we confess to the fact that on a daily basis we are guilty of "Leaving the school and following the money." The most basic understanding of the statement relates to the fact that humans are more interested in physical pleasures attained through money, than in learning and growing spiritually achieved in a school.

However, after noticing that the author of this well-known poem is none other than Rabbi Leon De Modena, I wonder if perhaps the "following the money" that is being confessed is something far more complex. ■

Rabbi Yirmiya Milevsky is spiritual director of Congregation B'nai Torah in Toronto.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Frances Claire Zeit	Oct 10/15	45 Stonedene Boulevard
Pearl Shopiro	Oct 10/15	434 Bankside Crescent
Alex York	Oct 10/15	102 Peckham Avenue
Emanuel (Manny) Weiner	Oct 10/15	
Rose Korman	Oct 11/15	718 Sheppard Avenue, West
Nina Henechowicz	Oct 12/15	7300 Yonge Street
Marjorie Grosman	Oct 12/15	6 Hollybrook Crescent
Arnold Freeman	Oct 13/15	32 Clarisa Drive
Hilary Gruson	Oct 13/15	7300 Yonge Street
Linda Chrobotek	Oct 15/15	54 Regent Road
Dr. John Greisman	Oct 11/15	7124 Estrella De Mar Road
Minabelle Haneford	Oct 13/15	2 Neptune Drive
Gabriele Silberberg	Oct 17/15	3900 Yonge Street
Murray Bernbaum	Oct 16/15	9700 Bathurst Street
Cecily Bahar	Oct 18/15	105 Waterloo Avenue

HEDREW

Rose Bornstein	Oct 16/15	170 Redmaple Road
Keastner DeLeon	Oct 15/15	No Fixed Address

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Bedouin Israeli diplomat targeted at U of Windsor

Anti-Israel students disrupt, walk out of lecture. **PAGES 12**

Community marks Remembrance Day

A modern take on a classic song of peace. **PAGE 27**

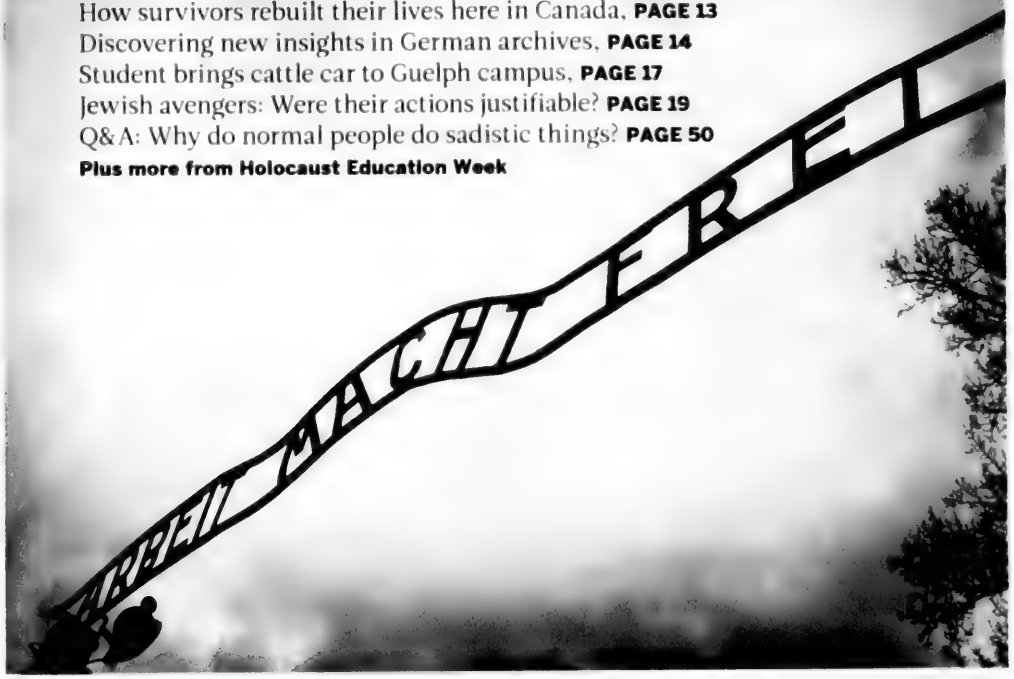
Honouring Canadian Jews who went to war. **PAGE 28**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:38 p.m.	5:42 p.m.
Montreal	4:16 p.m.	5:20 p.m.
Ottawa	4:25 p.m.	5:29 p.m.
Toronto	4:44 p.m.	5:46 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:39 p.m.	5:48 p.m.
Calgary	4:43 p.m.	5:53 p.m.
Vancouver	4:25 p.m.	5:32 p.m.

Teaching the Shoah

How survivors rebuilt their lives here in Canada, **PAGE 13**
Discovering new insights in German archives, **PAGE 14**
Student brings cattle car to Guelph campus, **PAGE 17**
Jewish avengers: Were their actions justifiable? **PAGE 19**
Q&A: Why do normal people do sadistic things? **PAGE 50**
Plus more from Holocaust Education Week



Leni Riefenstahl's evolving influence

How the thematic ethos of *Triumph of the Will* resonates on social media. **PAGE 51**

Should we embrace intermarried rabbis?

COMMENTARY: Recent decision is true to Reconstructionist spirit, David Weinfeld argues. **PAGE 10**

Wanted: A home for old books

Toronto's Jewish Public Library collection languishes in storage 8 years after closure. **PAGE 40**

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Bibi calls Justin, and a comedian promotes Holocaust education

Expect change in tone, Trudeau says

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Justin Trudeau Oct. 23 to congratulate him on his election win. Israeli Ambassador to Canada Rafael Barak said Israel was assured that relations will stay strong even after the defeat of Stephen Harper's pro-Israel Tories, *Canadian Press* reported. "Mr. Trudeau has been very consistent from the very beginning of his campaign in expressing his support for Israel," Barak said. "I'm sure maybe the style will change. But I don't feel there will be a change on the substance. I'm really reassured." A Liberal spokesperson said the call was "very positive" and that Trudeau "explained there would be a shift in tone, but Canada would continue to be a friend of Israel's."

Nathan Fielder's Shoah jacket

Canadian Jewish comedian Nathan Fielder went on the talk show *Conan* Oct. 22 to discuss his new outdoor clothing line that promotes Holocaust education. Wearing a Summit Ice windbreaker, Fielder explained that he developed the line after learning Vancouver-based Taiga, the jacket brand he used to wear, once published a tribute to late B.C. Holocaust denier Doug Collins in its catalogue. "The jacket's water-resistant, it's got a two-way stretch, it's very breathable, and [it lets] you know that six million Jews did die," he told host Conan O'Brien. "We're all about the quality and getting those facts out." All profits go to the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

Nathan Fielder wearing his Summit Ice windbreaker on *Conan*.
YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT

Roger Waters sells out

A theatre in Sag Harbor, N.Y., offered refunds to a sold-out show by Roger Waters, who supports a boycott of Israel, but said it got no takers. Waters, former frontman of rock band Pink Floyd, has vocally criticized artists who perform in Israel. He was scheduled to play Oct. 30 at the Bay Street Theater and was expected to face picketers in a protest organized by pro-Israel groups. The Simon Wiesenthal Center also urged New Yorkers to boycott the gig, but the theatre's executive director said no one asked for their money back and people were "begging for tickets." ■

Gematria

245

The number of Roots stores internationally Michael Budman, 69, and Don Green, 66, said last week they've sold a majority stake in the iconic fashion retailer to Searchlight Capital Partners.

$1.25B

The value in U.S. dollars of a contract signed by El Al last week to add 15 Boeing aircraft to its fleet, including 11 new 787 Dreamliner planes.

Quotable

"

It requires half a country to commit genocide, and we don't have a justice system that's able to contend with that. Even if we did, you can't put your entire country in jail.

— Holocaust historian Hilary Earl. See full interview on page 50.

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

How the UN could help

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has accused Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of incitement by falsely accusing Israel of upsetting a delicate status quo at a sensitive holy site revered by Jews and Muslims. Abbas says the violence is a natural result of decades of occupation and the lack of political solution.

United Nations secretary general Ban Ki-moon recently visited Israel and he could help solve the situation by visiting the Temple Mount and observing for himself that there has been no change in the status quo. If the secretary general is truly honest and objective, he would stand before the United Nations and indicate that the Palestinians are wrong and that Israel is upholding the agreement with respect to the Temple Mount that was made after the 1967 war.

I am afraid it would take a bigger man than the secretary general to make an honest proclamation, even though it would likely end the violence.

Bert Raphael
Toronto

Renewed memorial a 'shandeh'

I have visited the Earl Bales Shoah memorial many times ("Refurbished memorial draws 600 to Shoah event," Oct. 15). This profoundly moving place has always deeply affected me. I've always taken foreign visitors to the site. Without exception, my guests have been visibly moved and have fallen silent when they beheld the message, the chimney, the markers, and, sadly, the many names.

I shall never visit or show visitors this new travesty. From a successful, almost holy place, to remember, we now have a crass, tasteless, loud shandeh. The monuments are now worthy to compete with the advertising billboards on Bathurst Street.

The names of the martyrs are diminished. The donors are the focus. In starkly contrasting colour, script and huge in size, the donors have become the heroes. From what was once the reverent approach from the driveway, one now passes between heavy obelisks shouting, "Look at me! I gave!"

I thank and respect the donors. The donors should be recognized, but they should not be centre stage. They should not overwhelm the real purpose of this memorial.

Place the names of the donors a little distance off. Do not have the donors' names belittle our martyrs. Let's re-donate and rework this embarrassment.

Let us recall Maimonides' eight levels of charity.

Steve Mitchell
Toronto

Post-election reflections

Benjamin Shinewald wrote a very good piece ("After the election, a new day for the Jewish community," Oct. 29).

I, for one, am sick of being told by Jewish Conservatives that I have to vote Conservative in order to show gratitude to outgoing prime minister Stephen Harper, regardless of my views on the economy, social policy, the environment, etc. It is good to see that Prime Minister-elect Justin Trudeau and NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair neutralized this issue and made it clear that none of the major parties are anti-Israel.

The attempt to make Israel a wedge issue failed, as it looks like Canadian Jews trended away from the Tories in the recent election.

Matt Rosenberg
Comment from CJNews.com

Asking the right question

Paul Socken's article, "The gift of a good question" (Oct. 8), and his assertion that "Jews in particular are a curious lot, obsessed with questions, whether or not there is an answer" brought to mind an anecdote about the late Nobel Laureate physicist, Isidor Rabi. When he was asked why he became a scientist, he said, "My mother made me a scientist without ever intending it. Every other Jewish mother in Brooklyn would ask her child after school 'So? Did you learn anything today?' But not my mother. She always asked me a different question. 'Izzy,' she would say, 'did you ask a good question today?'"

Years ago, I mentioned Rabi's comment to a colleague of mine, Barry Hennick, at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto. Later that day, he put up a sign on his classroom door which read: "Did you ask a good question today?"

Eli Honig
Toronto

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RABBI·2·RABBI

Gendered mitzvot and separate roles

Is there a place for spaces and rituals that are only meant for men or women, or is there is a way to balance traditional modes and contemporary sensitivities?

RABBI AVI FINEGOLD
FOUNDER, THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY, MONTREAL

RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM
BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Finegold: In the past couple of years, I have noticed a marked increase in events billed as "challah bakes." These functions are geared to women in the community as a way to do a mitzvah that is "theirs," and often include a component of prayer for those who are ill or in need of assistance in the community.

Every time I come across a flyer for an event like this, I want to applaud it. But I also begin to ponder the nature of gendered mitzvot and whether the mitzvah of separating challah is actually the best vehicle for discussing separate roles for those of different genders in the community.

As a Conservative rabbi, how do you view gender and its role in ritual? Clearly you feel like the prayer space is fully equal, but is there a place in our faith for spaces and rituals that are only meant for men or women?

After all, if a man bakes bread, he is also obligated to separate challah.

Rabbi Scheim: The very day that I write this response, my synagogue is hosting a challah bake, with mostly, but not entirely, female participation.

In an earlier age, this would have suggested boundaries to the "woman's place" in Jewish life. Certainly, in my congregation, this is not the case, since women can participate in ritual equal to men, with the exception of the kohen and levi Torah honours and *Birkat Kohanim* (the priestly blessing) on festivals, which we limit to men.

Upholding the distinction between the sexes when it comes to kohen/levi, and maintaining the tradition that such lineage is patrilineal while Jewishness is matrilineal, is not without controversy. There is room, I believe, for some degree of sex-specific roles in ritual, reflecting the challenging balance between classical/traditional modes and legitimate contemporary sensitivities.

Rabbi Finegold: Your examples seem to highlight what I think the underlying issue is here. In the 21st century, there are men who bake and would love to participate in challah bakes, thus undermining the stereotype that women belong in the kitchen and should, therefore, be the ones that make the bread in the family.

This is a major upheaval that leaves many people who want to cling to tradition feeling uncomfortable. On the other hand, the priesthood does not play a major role in most peoples' lives and is an easier place to create sex-specific roles.

The dynamic at play here is that there is much more, even in traditional or Orthodox Judaism. By focusing on the differences that are specific to men or to women, we potentially create an unhealthy space for gender discussion. For example, in Orthodoxy, if we dwell on the commandments that are specific to women, rather than on the fact that the vast majority of mitzvot are open to both sexes, we are sending the message that women belong in the home and the mikveh, rather than in the beit midrash.

In essence, the contemporary sensitivity that you speak of seems to be more about redefining the existing Torah, something which I think we both can agree on.

Rabbi Scheim: Some patterns are definitely difficult to break. The Conservative movement has tried hard to encourage women to put on tfillin, suggesting that tfillin need not be exclusive to men. This endeavour has clearly not met with success, for very few women outside of the rabbinate have chosen to do so.

It may be that existing rituals, such as candlelighting and tfillin, have become so identified with one sex that they become very hard to introduce to the opposite sex, no matter whatever halachic justification one may find. You are right in suggesting that most mitzvot – especially those not time-bound such as prayer, study, Sabbath and festival observance – apply equally to men and women. That "common ground" aspect of Judaism certainly deserves greater emphasis.

Having just left Ben-Gurion Airport earlier today, walking by the booth where men are encouraged to put on tfillin, it occurs to me that outreach for men and women together to engage in practise of Jewish ritual would be a welcome addition to the public Jewish sphere. With a combination of creativity and audacity, perhaps such an opportunity could be created. ■

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Vol. XLV, No. 43 (2,219)*

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Editorial e-mail: cjninfo@gmail.com
Advertising e-mail: adscjn@gmail.com **Website:** www.cjnews.com
Subscription inquiries: 416-932-5095
Toll Free: 1-866-849-0864 **Fax:** 416-932-2488
E-mail: cjncontact@gmail.com
Sales, National & Toronto Local: Canadian Primedia, 416-922-3605

Israeli Advertising Representative:
IMP, Tel: 02-625-2933, E-mail: info@impmedia.co.il

Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation:
July 14, 2015

Canadian Heritage / Patrimoine canadien

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Postage Paid at Toronto Canada Post Publication Agreement #40010684
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage

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From the Archives | Histadrut seminar

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

The Ontario Trade Union Council for Histadrut seminar weekend was held at the Holiday Inn in Toronto in 1980. The invited guests seated at a banquet table are, from left, Max Federman, Margaret and Morden Lazarus. Standing is Harry Simon.

SeeJN | Back in Israel

KOBI GIDEON/GPO PHOTO

Former U.S. president Bill Clinton met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Oct. 30. Clinton was in Israel to deliver a speech in Tel Aviv at a rally marking the 20th anniversary of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination. Clinton had delivered a eulogy at Rabin's funeral. See page 33.

From Yoni's Desk

The media's role in helping agunot

The *Dayton Jewish Observer* was the first to report last week about the plight of Adina Porat. In 1990, she married a man named Dovid Porat in Israel, and the couple would go on to have five children. But in 2007, Porat left his family and moved to the United States, where he assumed the name Eli Shur. As he set about trying to build a new identity, Adina Porat was also trying to start anew. But she couldn't, because Shur refused to grant her a *get* (Jewish divorce).

For years, the Organization for the Resolution of Agunot (ORA) has tried to secure a *get* for Adina Porat, but to no avail. Now, ORA is appealing to the viral power of the Internet and the collective authority of community. Last week, the website www.freeadina.com went online, containing information about the case and pictures of both parties, and promoting a Nov. 8 protest near Shur's home.

It remains to be seen whether these latest efforts will prove successful, but they appear to indicate the emergence of a new form of public campaigning on behalf of agunot, women who are "chained" to their marriages. The Porat-Shur case is the second in two years to play out in the press, after the *New York Post* broke the story of Gital Dodelson, a Lakewood, N.J., woman whose husband, Avrohom Meir Weiss, also refused to give her a *get*. Three months after Dodelson's story went viral, Weiss relented.

Adina Porat and the ORA clearly took notice of the satisfying ending to Dodelson's ordeal. And they're not the only ones: a few weeks back, I was introduced to a young woman whose Israeli husband refuses to grant her a *get*. When I asked her how I could help, she requested that I help her place a story about her husband in some of the major Israeli newspapers. She hoped the media might be able to shame her husband into freeing her.

Around the Jewish world, there are countless organizations and individuals working tirelessly to help agunot, and there have been a number of successes in recent years. If the media and the Internet can be harnessed to further this agenda, that can only add another powerful weapon in this essential battle.

* * *

In this week's *CJN*, Bill Gladstone reports on the bizarre story of the Albert and Temmy Latner Jewish Public Library of Toronto (see page 40). Eight years ago, the library was closed "due to a lack of resources and a decline in circulation of books being taken out," according to spokesperson Dara Solomon. Ever since, the library's more than 30,000-plus volumes have been confined to a storage facility.

"No one is interested in taking on older books," Solomon explains to Gladstone. "I haven't been able to find any interest in them."

I distinctly remember visiting the library as a young student doing research for school projects. It's hard to imagine that there's no better use for this collection than gathering dust in a dark locker. Isn't there anyone out there who can give a good home to these Jewish books? If you have any ideas, please let us know. ■ — YONI

ANALYSIS

India strengthens Israel's Asia strategy

Ng Weng Hoong

The groundbreaking first visit to Israel by an Indian president Oct. 13 to 15 hardly featured in the global media, which were more focused on a potential third intifadah uprising, the growing U.S.-Russia proxy war in Syria, and the Iranian parliament's approval of Tehran's nuclear deal with six global powers.

Nevertheless, President Pranab Mukherjee's historic entry into Jerusalem from the Palestinian territories and his stirring speeches to underline New Delhi's pro-Israel shift could have a more lasting impact on the Middle East as it adds India, together with China, to Israel's increasing security, political and economic pivot toward Asia.

Mukherjee's opening speech powerfully and unequivocally laid out India's support for Israel as he condemned "the growing menace of terrorism and extremism" amid the outbreak of Palestinian stabbings of Israelis.

In the Knesset, he spoke of the two countries as "fellow democracies," while remembering "with gratitude" that Israel had supported India's claim to a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and provided defence supplies to his country during a 1999 war with Pakistan. He said "persecuted Jews" who first sought refuge in his country more than 2,000 years ago "will always be an integral part of India's composite society."

Already Israel's largest defence market, India will look to increase bilateral co-operation in security matters, technology and agriculture, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said following a meeting with Mukherjee.

India's pro-Israel shift has been pronounced since the May 2014 election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he shares the Jewish nation's fear of radical Islam and a strong personal bond with Netanyahu, said Efraim Inbar, the director of the Tel Aviv-based Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA).

Modi's Hindu-based BJP-led government has abstained in three major UN votes against Israel, reversing India's past automatic support for the Arab world. To be sure, Mukherjee affirmed India's traditional support for "a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, with east Jerusalem as its capital" during his visit to the Palestinian territories. On Oct. 21, India also joined 25 countries in a UN motion to condemn "Israel's aggression" on the Temple Mount.

Nevertheless, "there is a growing common strategic agenda between India and Israel," said Inbar, who notes the Indian establishment has grown tired of backing Arab causes. He said that despite decades of loyally voting with the Arab nations against Israel, India has found itself at the receiving end of the Islamic world's continued support for Pakistan.

Modi's India has become less fearful of offending the Arab world, which is in political and economic meltdown because of worsening internal conflicts, the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS) and the collapse of oil and gas prices, Inbar said.

India is also encouraged by Sunni-led Saudi Arabia courting Israel to counter Iran's Shia regime, which is emerging from isolation as it edges toward a nuclear deal with the P5+1 group.

Like China, an increasingly confident India is also deeply engaged with Iran, and this, ironically, could serve to bolster Israel's security interest.

"Iran listens to India and China. The Iranians have a completely different relationship with India and China than they have with the West," said Asia watcher Shalom Salomon Wald at the Jerusalem-based Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI).

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Indian President Pranab Mukherjee, left, shake hands during a meeting at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem Oct. 15. HAIM ZACH/GPO PHOTO

Apart from their shared long history of cultural interactions and trade ties, "the Iranians can't blame the Indians or the Chinese for anything that has gone wrong with their country," Wald said in a phone interview.

But unlike Israel, India welcomes Iran's nuclear deal with the P5+1 group, as it opens up the possibility of expanded trade and strategic ties between the two countries. Apart from a long-term role in developing one of the world's largest oil and gas reserves, India is also staking out a position in Iran's Chabahar deep-sea port facing the Indian Ocean, which has suffered from a lack of investment after years of trade and economic sanctions. The two countries recently signed an agreement to develop the port and support infrastructure to help India's push to expand trade into Central Asia as well as compete against China.

Despite his belief in the growing positive influence of India and China in the Middle East, Wald is surprisingly pessimistic that the two Asian powers will deter Iran from its alleged plans to attack Israel.

"For the Islamic religious fanatics, the elimination of Israel is their raison d'être. It's a very old tradition in Shia Islam to hate and persecute Jews," Wald said. Inbar, who also opposes the Iran nuclear deal, shares Wald's fears.

But India appears not to subscribe to the bleak assessment that Iran is planning to attack Israel, at least not for now. In separate interviews, two Indian scholars said Iran has more pressing issues to worry about, especially its worsening conflicts with Saudi Arabia.

"Iran has a lot of 'catching up' to do, having lost momentum owing to sanctions. Why would it undo the gains from the deal and the opportunity to recover by attacking Israel and inviting the return of sanctions?" said Rajesh Manohar Basrur, professor of international relations at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore's Nanyang Technological University.

With its growing stake in the Middle East, India has much to lose if Iran and Israel go to war against each other, said Meena Singh Roy, a research fellow at the New Delhi-based Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.

"The Iranians are a pragmatic people. At the same time, India and other Asian countries today have a lot at stake in both Iran and Israel keeping the peace," Roy said. While still dependent on the Middle East for their energy supplies, Asian countries are also increasingly vested in the region's geopolitical stability amid the spread of radical Islam and ISIS, she said.

As with Mukherjee's under-reported visit to Israel, Asia's understated influence could be an unlikely new source of hope to limit conflicts in the Middle East. ■

Ng Weng Hoong is a Vancouver journalist who specializes in writing about energy issues in Asia and the Middle East.

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Korean Catholic co-chairs Holocaust Education Week

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

This year's Holocaust Education Week (HEW), from Nov. 2 to 9, offers a lot of diversity.

Among the 160 or so programs, panels and lectures is one that will examine the Holocaust's rallying cry of "never again" from a Christian perspective, featuring Catholic theologian Gregory Baum; one that will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide; one that will look at the persecution of homosexuals by the Nazi regime and its meaning for gay survivors; and HEW's first-ever discussion of anti-Semitism in the Muslim world, featuring a Muslim speaker.

There are also more new venues than in years past, including Catholic and secular public schools.

In keeping with that spirit of outreach is this year's HEW co-chair, Lily Kim.

"I'm not the typical face of Holocaust education or the Jewish community," readily accedes Kim, a Christian of Korean parentage.

Her presence on the scene "makes people stop and listen," she said.

> *I love everything about Israel, the culture, the country, the people.*

A 42-year-old educator and mother of two boys, Kim first got involved in HEW in 2008 as a Christian liaison. She had seen a decrease in the involvement of Christian churches and schools in the program and set out to correct that.

HEW now has an interfaith outreach committee, which has worked to stage what Kim calls "non-traditional" programs at more venues. This year's theme explores "Liberation: Aftermath & Rebirth" and will look at the raw years after the Holocaust.

Born outside Vancouver to Buddhist parents who left South Korea in the early 1970s and converted to Christianity, Kim studied history at the University of British Columbia. For a brief time, she taught English to doctors and nurses at a hospital outside Seoul and considered doing an international business degree.

Lily Kim

Instead, she enrolled in McMaster University's divinity school and earned a master's degree in theological studies.

"I was always very interested in the Hebrew Bible," Kim told *The CJN* in an interview. "I found many similarities between Christianity and Judaism. Most appealing to me was the concept of mercy and love, not only for those inside the religions but for those outside — the other."

Still, she found Christian texts "too limiting" and "was more interested in Jewish culture."

Around a decade ago, she made her first trip to Israel – there would be four more through the years – and fell in love.

"I love everything about Israel," Kim said, "the culture, the country, the people. It's messy, but so is Korea."

Each time, Kim visited Yad Vashem, Israel's central Holocaust authority and museum.

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Azrieli Holocaust memoirs celebrate 10th anniversary

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

A decade ago, when Naomi Azrieli and her late father David first put out a call for unpublished memoirs by Holocaust survivors in Canada with the intention of preserving and sharing them, they were not sure what the response would be.

They soon realized the Azrieli Foundation would be fulfilling an unmet need: the desire of so many to tell what happened to them during the war and afterward – before it was too late.

"We received manuscripts in English, French, Yiddish, Polish, Russian and Hungarian," Naomi said at an Oct. 26 celebration of the Holocaust memoirs publishing program's 10th anniversary.

"Some were typed, some were handwritten. They were full length, and even poetry," she said.

Over its history, the program has received more than 180 manuscripts, and numberless other types of Holocaust-related submissions. To date, 62 titles by 42 authors have been published (some are available in English and French).

The selected manuscripts are turned into highly readable stories and published as high-quality paperbacks, containing photos and illustrations, by a team of editors, translators and artists.

In recent years, videos have been added. Interviews with the authors are enhanced with animation and dramatic narration in these short films.

The books and videos are given festive launches with author tributes and signings.

Education is the program's main goal and the books are made available free of charge to anyone, with high schools, colleges and libraries the target audience.

In recent years, the Toronto-based program has been increasing its outreach in Quebec. This year alone, 20,000 books were distributed in the province, said Azrieli, the foundation's chair and CEO. Across the country, close to 65,000 books have been sent out – so far.

Eleven new editions were unveiled at the celebration, including *Alone in the Storm* (*Seul dans la tourmente*) by Leslie Vertes and *Where Courage Lives* (*Les Lieux du courage: Ils m'appelaient Marie*) by Muguette Myers, both of Montreal, who spoke on behalf of their fellow authors.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

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Intermarrying rabbis: punchlines or prophets?

David Weinfeld

Jackie Mason famously joked, "My synagogue is so Reform, the rabbi is a gentile." Now, with the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC) recently deciding to admit students whose partners are non-Jews, and to ordain current students with non-Jewish partners, Mason's joke is approaching reality. And the "ever-dying people" must ask their timeless question: is this good for the Jews?

North American Jews have faced this sort of situation before. In 1873, Rabbi Felix Adler, son of and heir apparent to Reform Rabbi Samuel Adler, gave an address at Temple Emanu-El in New York. Called "Judaism of the Future," it omitted any mention of God, instead arguing that Jews should lead the way toward a universal religion founded on moral principles.

Facing a mix of protest and support, Rabbi Felix Adler founded the Society for Ethical Culture in 1877 – a clear move away from Jewish particularism, as his new society welcomed gentiles by removing all Judaic liturgy and rituals.

Some years later, Reform Rabbi Charles Fleischer began to take his Boston congregation, Adath Israel, in a similar direction. In 1900, he attempted to move the traditional Saturday morning services to Sunday. In 1911, after many fights with the synagogue's board of trustees, he resigned from Adath Israel and founded the Sunday Commons, an ecumenical, non-denominational congregation that combined Reform Judaism with liberal Protestantism to create a progressive and humanistic religion dedicated to fostering "enlightened citizenship." In 1919, he put the icing on his assimilationist wedding cake, marrying Mabel R. Leslie, a Presbyterian.

But unlike rabbis Adler and Fleischer, intermarried rabbis today are not using their professional roles as Jewish leaders to diminish Jewish particularism. They are not asking their congregants to accept the divinity of Jesus, Mohammed or Buddha. As long as they preach and profess Judaism from the pulpit, they are fulfilling their rabbinical duties.

The families of intermarried rabbis may encounter some difficulties raising their children, as all intermarried families do when faith is important to one or both parents. Even some who support the Reconstructionist college's decision may wonder why a Jew dedicated to the rabbinate would choose to date outside the faith, or why a non-Jew willing to marry a rabbi would not be willing to convert to Judaism. But these are questions for their therapists.

The Reconstructionist movement has always been on the cutting edge in addressing these questions. In 1935, the movement's founder, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, defined Judaism as an evolving religious civilization that needed to be reconstructed in every age and context. He famously suggested that Halachah, Jewish law, be given "a vote, but not a veto." That flexible motto allows for progressive adaptation that remains true to the spirit of Jewish tradition, and, by extension, Jewish particularism. Ordaining women, allowing same-sex marriage between Jews, and accepting Jews of patrilineal descent may have flouted Halachah, but these changes clearly enhanced the vitality, and the numeric strength, of the Jewish community.

Rabbi Kaplan was not strictly a theist, prompting some to joke that Reconstructionist Jews believe in "at most one God." Political scientist Charles Liebman once quipped that 70 per cent of American Jews are Reconstructionist "and they don't know it." Rabbi Kaplan's motto simply codified a reality: modern Jews prefer a pick-and-choose style Judaism to a legalistic one. Reconstructionism mimicked and legitimated behaviour that was already in place.

In that sense, the decision to allow intermarried rabbis is true to the Reconstructionist spirit, for intermarriage is a clearly established reality of Diaspora Jewish life. Thus, the Reconstructionist approach is let us use intermarriage, rather than bend to its will. Let intermarriage be a force for particularism, rather than universalism, by making more room in our unique community for those who want to embrace its uniqueness. ■

David Weinfeld teaches American Studies at the University of Toronto.

The educative power of a connected community

Daniel Held

I was in my second year of teaching when Jane Jacobs died. I knew Jacobs as the community organizer who ensured that Toronto's Allen Expressway didn't go south of Eglinton Avenue and New York's West Side Highway ended in the 40s. Stuck in traffic, I had often taken my frustration out on Jacobs. The CBC's retrospective on her, however, explained her philosophy and informed my thinking about Jewish community.

Cars, Jacobs argued, close off community. By stepping into a car and shutting the door, we close the door on our neighbours and isolate ourselves. A vocal advocate for public transit, Jacobs saw buses and trains as a way of building community.

At the time of her death, I was commuting from the school where I was teaching to the university where I was completing a master's degree. I decided I'd follow Jacob's advice and take the bus. The first day, I parked my car, got on the bus and sat down, ready to build community. I turned to my left and found a person plugged into an iPod; then turned to my right and found someone talking on his cellphone.

While this experiment in community building failed, it underscored the importance of setting and construct when it comes to community. Talking recently with a colleague about her own Jewish journey, I was struck by the reasons she offered for why she exposed herself to various experiences. She went to camp because her best friend was going. She went to a youth group because there was a cute guy there. And she goes to synagogue because of the programs for her kids. The social networks we weave both bring us to Jewish experiences and reinforce their impact on our lives.

In their book, *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How they Shape our Lives*, Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler explain that "the social influence does not end with the people we know. If we affect our friends, and they affect their friends, then our actions can potentially affect people we have never met." Christakis and Fowler chart the impact that social networks have on nearly every aspect of our lives – from smoking and weight to economics and politics.

People who work in settings of immersive Jewish learning have known this for decades. The power of day schools, camps and Israel trips is not only in the taught curriculum, but is fuelled by the sociology of the group experience – setting norms for communal living and shared expectations of peers. The educators who create these experiences pour hours of diligent thought into how to construct the setting, activities and unstructured time to maximize these community experiences. The peer-to-peer reinforcement of values is critical to their success in forging strong Jewish identities.

Jacob's philosophy, however, taught me that the power of the connected social network goes beyond the curated environments of schools, shuls and camps. Jewish neighbourhoods are important crucibles for the development of Jewish life and identity. Thousands of families make a conscious decision to live in Jewish neighbourhoods, even thought other areas of town may be less expensive. In Toronto, Thornhill Woods' growing population of young families is a prime example. In deciding to live there, families are implicitly saying that they want their children to grow up in a particular social, cultural and religious milieu. While we don't have tools to measure it, Jacobs, Christakis and Fowler would agree that the nature of connected communities powerfully reinforces the values we want our families to have.

In a gastronomical culture like ours, it's easy to say that you are Jewishly what you eat. In truth, you are who you're connected to, and the challenge to us as a community is to think about how we build and maintain those connections. ■

Daniel Held is executive director of the Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Echoes of the past in some of our rituals

Jean M. Gerber

The days of Sukkot for me are among the highlights of the year. All the Days of Awe are, well, awesome, but Sukkot is aptly named a time for rejoicing. The harvest is in, looks like rain, the temple service is filled with prayers for the coming year.

Oh, wait, we don't bring in a harvest in Vancouver or Toronto. Two thousand years after that Temple went up in flames, we live by and large in cities. Vancouver could certainly use rain (don't laugh), but the downpours we pray for are supposed to fall in the land of Israel.

So what is special about Sukkot? It is *benching lulav* (praying with the lulav and the etrog).

Which brings me to the main thrust of this article. Magic. Magic and superstitions, bad luck or a good mazal, that lucky star.

Perhaps the ceremonies of Sukkot are not magic, but they are magical.

Having been at the Kotel (Western Wall) during Sukkot, I remember clearly a sea of tallitot and the high wands of the lulavim as hundreds blessed the season. The end of Sukkot found hundreds more celebrating drawing of the water. It was then that I realized the utter pagan foundation of this beloved ceremony, this sympathetic magic.

Perhaps pagan is a strong word: we assume that our ceremonial practices are, and ever were, monotheistic. Yet, the origins of this festival seem rooted (no pun intended) in harvest times, when Israelite farmers dependent on abundant rain and plentiful harvests to sustain life sought ways to make heaven hear their pleas.

Judaism believes that prayer and repentance at this time of year will reach the One whom we trust, just as 2,000 years ago, the people of Israel believed their Temple rituals would bring the needed rain.

A reading of books such as *Jewish Magic and Superstition* by Joshua Trachtenberg reveals a myriad of practices that Jews have observed, reflecting a very un-Jewish back story.

Take the magic circle drawn by the bride when she circles her husband seven times. Clearly meant to protect this fragile male from the evil designs of creatures like Lilith who try to steal the groom. Ditto breaking the wedding glass, the sound of which scares away demons.

> *I realized the utter pagan foundation of this beloved ceremony, this sympathetic magic*

Or changing the sick male child's name to Alter to fool the angel of death.

Or not blowing the shofar on Erev Rosh Hashanah, to hide the fact that we are about to open ourselves to a new year.

Now, I am not suggesting that we pin amulets on our children, or draw a circle of salt around the baby's crib, or tie red thread around a boy's crib to protect against Lilith's demon children, or refrain from the ceremony of cutting a boy's hair at age three (to fool the angel of death into thinking he is a girl.)

But I do say that we should recognize in many of the practices we still observe (including covering the mirrors in a house of mourning) echoes from a far past when Judaism rubbed up against very un-Jewish beliefs that slowly made their way into mainstream Judaism.

I love the austerity of rabbinic Judaism. Rather than having the burden of the Law, of which we have often been accused, the joy of observance fills our lives with meaning.

But sometimes, just once in a while – and especially at Sukkot – I revel in the connection I can make with those Israelite farmers thousands of years ago who wanted to use every possible symbol in their thirst for water.

No charmers, wizards (OK, maybe Harry Potter) or mediums for me.

But now and then, do we not all find ourselves trying mightily to bring an influence into our lives from when our ancestors looked wherever they could to find just the right answer to their prayers? ■

Abbas' toxic rhetoric unreported as Israel blamed for violence

Paul Michaels

Rioting and random, gruesome stabbing attacks by Palestinians have left Israelis in a fearful state. The need to convey accurately and fairly to western audiences what's at issue has never been more essential.

Unfortunately, much of the media's reporting on the attacks has been woefully incomplete, devoid of context or jaded. As is typical when Israelis must protect themselves against terror attacks, there are references to a disparity in the "body count" – more Palestinians killed than Israelis, and charges of Israeli "overreaction" and "disproportionate" use of force fly with abandon.

In an Oct. 15 *Globe and Mail* article, Patrick Martin relied substantially on Diana Buttu, a Canadian-born lawyer and former adviser to PA President Mahmoud Abbas, for insight.

He quoted Buttu: "Amidst the violence and unrest, the Israeli army and police are operating on a 'shoot to kill' policy," leaving the impression that Israelis are wantonly brutal and callous. Indeed, when writing in late September about Abbas' threat to abandon the Oslo agreements, Martin cited Buttu, claiming that, in addition to settlers, "trigger-happy [Israeli] soldiers run rampant… terrorizing Palestinians with virtual impunity." On both occasions, Martin did not cite any Israeli authority or expert to provide Israel's side of the story.

In his mid-October report, Martin relied on Buttu about the core reason for the latest surge in the violence: "'The cause of Palestinian rage,' she insists, is the 'near-half-century of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, including Arab east Jerusalem.'"

Again, no Israeli is cited to refute this cookie-cutter "It's all about Israel's occupation" justification for violence. There's no mention that both former PA leader Yasser Arafat at Camp David in 2000 and Abbas during the Annapolis talks in 2008 rejected Israel's effort to create a Palestinian state and end the occupation. (Occasionally this column has drawn attention to these rarely mentioned historical facts in mainstream media stories, but they're critical to understanding the root of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian and broader Arab-Israeli conflicts.)

Buttu is among those Palestinians who may speak to western audiences about the need for "two states," but who in fact reject "two states for two peoples" because they reject that the Jews are a people with sovereign rights to their ancestral homeland, and they insist that Palestinian refugees have an inherent "right of return" to Israel, which would turn Israel into another Arab-majority state.

In his Oct. 24 *National Post* column, Robert Fulford provided a powerfully succinct account of how Palestinian incitement, including through the PA media, against Israeli Jews has had a toxic impact – starting with Palestinian children urged to become "martyrs" by carrying out attacks against Israelis. Abbas himself is deeply involved. "At every chance he gets, Mahmoud Abbas, the PA's president, throws the word 'martyr' at the terrorist, while calling for calm in the international press," Fulford noted.

In Martin's story, the only mention of incitement is his claim, immediately following Buttu's insistence on the centrality of Israeli occupation, that "The rage of some young people is egged on" by Gaza-based "preachers" – not that their "rage" is instilled in them by Hamas, the PA, and now, through social media, ISIS.

As to the violence surrounding the Temple Mount, Abbas' slur that the Jews "have no right to desecrate [it] with their dirty feet" received scant mention in western media and none in Martin's reports. In his Oct. 21 story about the controversy of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's incorrect claim that, in 1941, Haj Amin Al-Husseini, then the grand mufti of Jerusalem, planted the idea of the Final Solution in Hitler's mind, and Netanyahu's later attempt to clarify what he meant, Martin finally referred to Netanyahu's charge against Abbas of anti-Israel incitement.

Nonetheless, in the context of dealing with a question of Netanyahu's credibility, this would, in all fairness, have been the time for Martin to cite at least one example of Abbas' toxic rhetoric to show the validity of the allegation against him.

Sadly, this was not the case. ■

News

U of Windsor protest targets Bedouin Israeli diplomat

SHERI SHEFA
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A group of anti-Israel students hijacked a lecture by Israel's first Bedouin diplomat who had travelled to the University of Windsor to talk about his experience as a minority living in Israel because they "refused to allow a Zionist to lead the discussion on such a topic."

Law student Trevor Sher, who serves as the Jewish Student Association president at the University of Windsor, said Ishmael Khaldi, who has been working for the Israeli Foreign Ministry since 2004, was invited to campus to talk to students on Oct. 21 about his experience as a Bedouin in Israel and about minority rights.

"We thought it would be a good opportunity to provide a forum for intellectual discussion about what is a very complex issue, that is the Arab-Israeli conflict," Sher said.

"I thought he would be a perfect speaker, as someone who grew up as a minority in Israel can offer an insightful perspective about how minorities are treated and how things really are on the ground for them."

Sher said he was tipped off that there was going to be a walkout protest of Khaldi's talk, organized by a campus club called the Palestinian Solidarity Group.

"But we created this as a public event. The purpose of it was to bring in people who wanted to hear Khaldi's perspective. We didn't want to close off the event," he said.

He explained that the JSA, which includes members from all programs at the university, is a law school-ratified club, because most of the Jewish students at the university are in law school. The JSA decided to give priority seating to law students, but once they were all seated, they allowed undergraduate students and the demonstrators to sit in as well.

Sher said Khaldi was about 10 minutes into his presentation when the protest began.

"He didn't get into anything political. He started off by saying that protesting an event like his is a waste of time, saying, 'I'm not a politician, I'm just here to share my experience and my story.' He gave a few examples of the things he's trying to do to foster peace between Israelis and Palestinians," Sher said.

In a video uploaded to the Palestinian Solidarity Group's Facebook page, the protesters can be seen interrupting Khaldi by standing in their seats and taking turns shouting slogans at Khaldi before walking out as a group. One student can be heard saying, "Shame on you for supporting terrorism."

Sher said that once they walked out, those who remained were able to have a dialogue.

"One of the things Khaldi explained after the walkout was that people who take those kinds of actions are a barrier to peace. He made a really powerful statement... about there being only one pathway to peace, and that is through negotiation and dialogue," Sher said.

He said that following the walkout, the lecture continued, but Khaldi seemed more reserved and less willing to go into depth about Israeli politics and the conflict.

Ishmael Khaldi speaks to University of Windsor students after his talk.

> *I think the protesters succeeded to some extent in preventing a dialogue.*

"I think the protesters succeeded to some extent in preventing a dialogue. They made the environment such that it didn't feel like a real, open and honest dialogue was possible."

A *CJN* request for comment from the Palestinian Solidarity Group was declined, but a post on the group's Facebook page said, "we as pro-Palestinians refused to allow a Zionist to lead the discussion on such a topic... The pro-Palestinian voice is in charge of leading the discussions on Palestinian human rights on our campus, not Zionists.

"A constructive dialogue about Palestine cannot exist with anyone who denies the fundamental facts about the Palestinian occupation – that there is an illegal occupation... and that Israel by all measures is responsible for the vast majority of violence in Israel and Palestine."

Sher said the protesters followed up their demonstration with an appearance on a campus radio station show, *The Shake Up*, during which the protesters compared Zionists to neo-Nazis and members of the Ku Klux Klan.

"They said, the same way you wouldn't let a neo-Nazi or a member of the KKK talk about black rights, you shouldn't let a Zionist talk about Palestinian human rights," Sher said.

"Palestinians are suffering in Gaza and the West Bank, but to place the blame entirely on Israel is historically and factually incorrect."

Sher said the JSA will not make a formal complaint to the university about the protesters' conduct.

"While they may not respect our freedom of speech, we respect their freedom of speech. We respect that they are a group that considers themselves to be standing up for what they consider to be a just cause... It's not our place to deny the Palestinian narrative... I believe in taking the high road and not being brought down to a low level." ■

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Book examines survivors' early experiences in Canada

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While there is no shortage of writing on Holocaust survivors in Canada, Adara Goldberg's *Holocaust Survivors in Canada: Exclusion, Inclusion, Transformation, 1947-1955*, published this fall by University of Manitoba Press, explores a specific period that Goldberg says scholarship on the subject has tended to skip over.

Holocaust Survivors is based on research that Goldberg, a native Torontonian and currently the education director at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, conducted for her PhD dissertation at Clark University's Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

It examines the first-hand immigration, resettlement and integration experiences of the roughly 35,000 survivors who came to Canada in the decade after World War II.

Though books like Irving Abella and Harold Troper's *None Is Too Many* famously address Canada's immigration policy toward Jewish refugees during and after the Holocaust, Goldberg's book is unique insofar as it highlights, in her words, "the ordinary and day-to-day struggles of survivor integration, not from a legal perspective, but from the perspectives of the individuals themselves."

Further, Goldberg said the time in question is often overlooked, because "people have been so obsessed with hearing gruesome wartime stories and then looking at the lives that were ultimately built [after the trauma], but the period in between can seem mundane."

She noted, however, that it's an important period that "tells us how human beings cope with trauma and rebuild. It also tells us a lot about Canadian society at that time."

Using archival materials such as case records from social service agencies and immigration files, as well as the oral histories of survivors and Jewish communal leaders from the period, Goldberg has created a window into the foundational experiences of Holocaust survivors in Canada, most of whom came from eastern Europe.

Having conducted some 125 interviews with survivors, their descendants, congregational leaders, scholars and former social service workers, she was able to illustrate the ways survivors navigated Canadian society and rebuilt their lives after immense trauma.

In their personal interviews with her, many survivors shared their reasons for choosing Canada as a site of new beginnings, the ways average Canadians responded to them

upon their arrival and their efforts to build new lives despite, Goldberg said, "all odds being against them."

While it's known, she said, that the general Canadian public wasn't particularly well disposed to Jewish refugees at the time, she sought to look at how the survivors were treated by local Jewish communities when they first arrived. The book's focus ultimately became what Goldberg referred to as a "trifecta" of survivors, the Canadian Jewish community already in Canada, and the Jewish social service agencies that were charged with caring for the new Jewish arrivals.

Goldberg said her research revealed how much this unprecedented demand for refugee resettlement services was difficult for both the survivors and Jews who were already established in Canada.

While survivors' integration experiences and initial encounters with local Jewish communities were generally a "mixed bag," she said, most survivor accounts relate that the Canadian Jews' reception of them was fairly ambivalent or cold.

This wasn't because the Canadian Jews were "cruel or ill-intentioned" stressed Goldberg, whose own grandparents were all born in Canada, her great-grandparents having come from eastern Europe, but was reflective of the moment in history. "People didn't know about post-traumatic stress disorder then, and the Holocaust, as much as Canadian Jews knew about it, was probably impossible to comprehend," she said.

Goldberg emphasized that she makes no judgment about Jews who were already living in Canada. "These early interactions were so strained by language, culture, worldview, different experiences. It takes a long time for any group to overcome these things," she said.

Goldberg will be speaking about her book at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue on Nov. 5 at 7:30 p.m. ■

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Opening of German archives provides new information

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Containing some 180 million pages of Holocaust-related documents, the vast archives of the International Tracing Service (ITS) of the Red Cross in Bad Arolsen, Germany, was subject to strict German privacy laws until 2007, when an 11-country international commission decided to open it up to public access.

Today copies of the ITS records, which include deportation lists and concentration camp, forced labour camp, some death camp and displaced persons camp information, are available in several repositories around the world, including Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C.

To give Torontonians a better sense of this important collection, organizers of Holocaust Education Week arranged for the USHMM's Diane Afoumado to speak on Nov. 3 at Kehillat Shaarei Torah on "Restoring Family Trees Severed by the Holocaust," and to give private consultations to help people learn the specific fate of family members known to have perished.

Diane Afoumado

Afoumado, a Holocaust historian, told *The CJN* that ITS records are particularly rich in the postwar era but almost non-existent when it comes to death camps like Treblinka. Likewise, no lists were compiled of victims who were slaughtered on location, for example by the Nazi Einsatzgruppen death squads in Ukraine.

"Auschwitz was a camp with multiple functions, so we do have records from Auschwitz," she said. "We have records on everyone who entered the camp and was selected for forced labour. But if they were immediately sent to the gas chambers, their names do not appear in the Auschwitz collection. If they were registered beforehand on a deportation list, that would be the last trace we have of them."

> *We have a lot of requests from survivors who are seeking compensation for having been in hiding or in ghettos or in camps.*

Documents in the ITS were written in 27 languages and a variety of scripts including Roman, Cyrillic, Yiddish and Greek. Conducting research using the ITS material "can be very tedious, so you need to be quite passionate about what you are doing – it's time-consuming and can be very discouraging to spend hours looking for a document," Afoumado said. "It requires a lot of curiosity and common sense, some language skills, and some knowledge of the Holocaust."

The USHMM accepts research requests by email and will help families find out where their relatives perished. "We have a lot of requests from survivors who are seeking compensation for having been in hiding or in ghettos or in camps. Helping survivors is our top priority." The museum also helps children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of survivors, "some of whom don't know a lot about the Holocaust."

Survivors and families members typically express deep emotions when they finally discover their relatives' names on a list. "It's good to know that sometimes you find information that brings closure to people," Afoumado said. "This is the best reward you can get." ■

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum website is ushmm.org

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The Holocaust Memorial Site at Earl Bales Park in Toronto was constructed by the founders of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem to commemorate loved ones who perished in the Holocaust and survivors who rebuilt their lives in Canada and have since passed on.

Under the leadership of Fran Sonshine, National Chair, the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem has revitalized the Holocaust Memorial Site, which now features 25 new memorial elements that include stunning monuments, pillars, walls, and gardens.

Among these are the Ed and Fran Sonshine Children's Memorial Wall, which commemorates the 1.5 million Jewish children who perished in the Holocaust, and the Dominion Family Tree Heroes Wall, which pays tribute to Righteous Among the Nations, non-Jews who risked their lives to rescue Jews during the Holocaust.

The new Memorial Site provides Holocaust survivors, their families, and other community members with a suitable setting to remember loved ones and pay tribute to the heroism of the partisans, ghetto fighters, Allied Armed Forces, and the Righteous among the Nations. The site serves as a backdrop for meaningful events and programs that bring together people of varied faiths to learn about the Holocaust and contemporary issues.

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Survivor writes memoir about starting anew in Canada

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Many Holocaust survivors were unable to speak about the horrific events they lived through. Fortunately, however, some, like Gerda Frieberg, have been able to speak, and their testimony has been heard and recorded.

In her first book, published in 2013, *I Kept My Promise*, Frieberg writes her family's story.

Born in Upper Silesia, Poland, in 1925, she tells of her happy childhood that was transformed into a nightmare in 1939 when her father was taken away and never seen again.

Teenage sisters Gerda and Hana (Steinitz) and their mother were deported to Jaworzno Ghetto in 1940. In 1942, they were interned in Oberalstadt concentration camp in Germany. Frieberg lost 172 members of her family – she, her sister and her mother were the only survivors.

They were liberated by the Soviet army in 1945 and spent four years in a displaced persons camp in Germany.

Recently, Frieberg published her second volume, *Never a Bystander*, which begins with her arrival in Canada in 1953. With numerous pictures and documents, she recounts her hardships and her commitment to tell the Holocaust story and to work for human rights.

> *When I came to Canada with my husband and a six-week-old baby, I wanted to rebuild a family and the Jewish People.*

"When I came to Canada with my husband and a six-week-old baby, I wanted to rebuild a family and the Jewish People. Coming to Canada is where my journey begins."

With hard work and optimism, the Friebergs began to build their family, and eventually a successful real estate development business.

It was at her installation as president of a B'nai Brith chapter in 1964 that she spoke publicly about the Shoah for the first time. Suddenly, she says, many groups approached her to speak about the Holocaust. She has told her story to thousands of students and adults, Jewish and non-Jewish, across the country.

Never a Bystander tells of her rise as a community activist and educator. Frieberg was chair of the founding committee of the Toronto Holocaust Centre, chair of the Ontario region of Canadian Jewish Congress, founder of the Holocaust Survivors of Canada, and she organized Women for Soviet Jewry.

She has received the 125th Anniversary of Confederation of Canada Medal, the governor general's Meritorious Service Medal, the Elie Wiesel Holocaust Remembrance Award and many more.

"I considered my survival a gift to be dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Shoah. Amid the silence of the world, the plea of the victims, 'Remember us,' became a commandment."

Gerda Frieberg FSWC PHOTO

With chutzpah and tenacity, Gerda Frieberg, who could not speak English when she arrived in Canada, has left her indelible mark on her chosen country, Canada.

Frieberg lives in Toronto and has two children, Josey and Jack, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. ■

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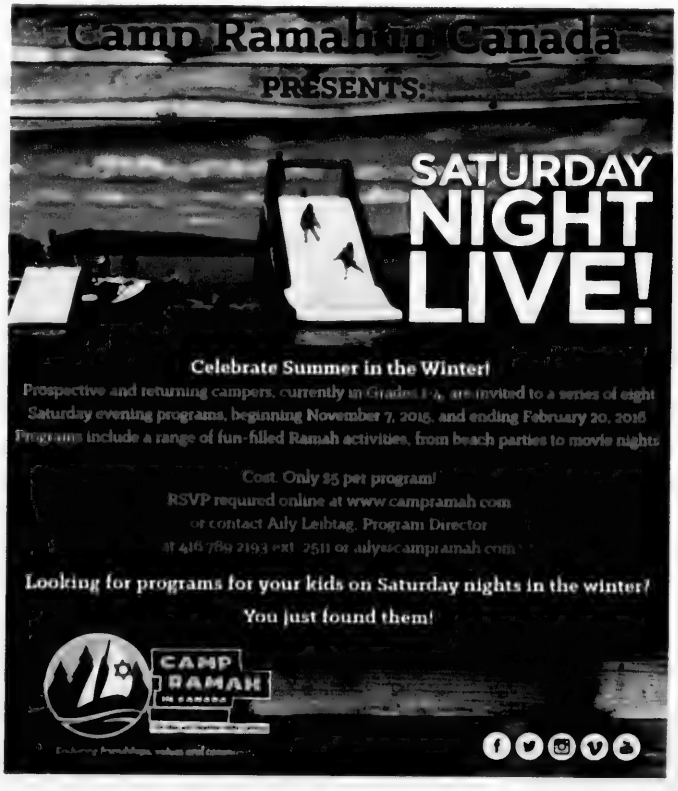
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CAMP RAMAH IN CANADA

Cattle car at centre of U of Guelph exhibit

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

When Jordana Lebowitz took on the role of Hillel's Holocaust Education Week co-ordinator, she thought long and hard about arranging a memorable campus program.

"I felt like I should go big, or go home," said the 20-year-old Thornhill native who is studying psychology at the University of Guelph.

"I wanted to help every person connect on a personal level to the Holocaust, not just those who have survivor loved ones or share the history. I wanted to bring something to campus to make them feel it."

About seven months ago, Lebowitz began co-ordinating her ambitious plan to bring to her campus a replica of a cattle car used to transport Jews from ghettos to concentration camps.

"When I came up with the idea, I was telling friends and family, and they all thought it was crazy and didn't know if I could do it. But I wanted to prove them wrong, that I could do this," she said with a laugh.

She said she wanted to create an exhibit that resonates not only with the Jewish students on campus, but with the non-Jews as well.

"I wanted them to have something tangible to connect to. Maybe they would go in the cattle car and feel scared, or cramped, see how dark it is," she said.

Lebowitz said locating the kind of cattle car she was looking for was no easy task.

"I started calling around, calling anyplace I could think of that would have a cattle car," she said.

"In all of North America, there are only two cattle car exhibits. One at the Paper Clips memorial in Tennessee and one at the Holocaust museum in Washington."

She tried the Halton County Radial Railway, a museum that gives visitors access to ride in old streetcars and trains, as well as farms – any places she could think of that might have access to a cattle car.

She said that in her search, she got in touch with a man who worked as a GO train operator in Toronto. He told her that on his route to and from Union Station, he passed a 1920s-era German cattle car replica, which was exactly what Lebowitz was looking for.

"I couldn't believe it. I was in shock," she said.

She learned that the cattle car belonged to a Toronto-based prop company that supplies a variety of vehicles for film production.

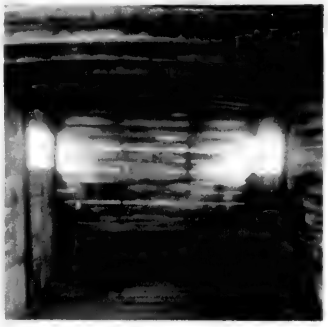
"They offered to donate the car for a week, so that was amazing," she said.

"I went to Hillel to tell them about what I had found, and what I wanted to do and they loved the idea and agreed to fund it," she said, adding that the cost of shipping the cattle car from Toronto to campus was about $3,000.

She said she worked with university administrators to go through the proper channels to get approval. While she was met with a little bit of resistance initially because of the logistics involved with shipping the car, in the end, administrators recognized the value of such an initiative.

The exhibit, which will be on display in the centre of the campus at Branion Plaza from Nov. 3 to 5, will include information about Adolf Hitler's rise to power, Nazi propaganda, the systematic murder of millions, as well as information about contemporary issues like racial inequality in the United States and recent genocides in Africa.

She said throughout the three days the exhibit will be open, there will be student volunteers providing information about the Holocaust, as well as a psychology professor who will be available to students who may feel negative emotions triggered by the graphic images and disturbing information.



The interior of the railway car

She said next year, she hopes to bring an authentic cattle car – one that was used to transport Jews to concentration camps – from Germany to campus. This initiative, she estimated, would cost about $50,000.

"I think that this program really embodies the eternal importance of Holocaust education and learning from humanity's past mistakes in order to shape a future of equality and tolerance." ■

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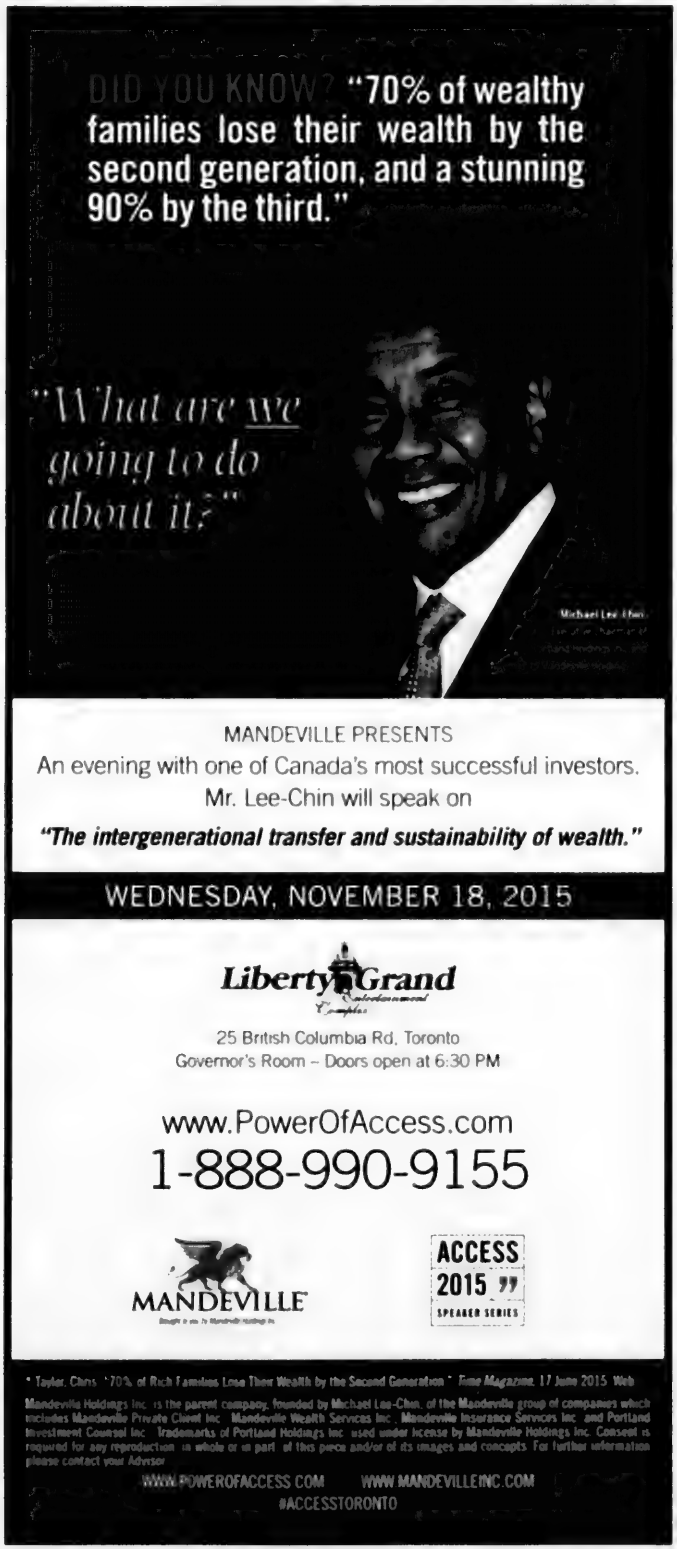
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#ACCESSTORONTO

Hamilton teachers attend U.S. Shoah conference

ABIGAIL CUKIER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, HAMILTON

Deborah Brown

Seven Hamilton, Ont., teachers are excited to get back in the classroom and share what they learned at last month's Ethel LeFrak Holocaust Education Conference at Pennsylvania's Seton Hill University.

Grace Centritto, Carolyn Craven, Deborah Brown, Krista Brodersen, Yvan Brochu, Krzysztof Gumiemak and Tobi Hawthorne, from the Hamilton public and Catholic secondary school boards, attended the conference Oct. 25 to Oct. 27.

The gathering, which takes place every three years, sought to enhance Catholic-Jewish understanding by equipping teachers and faculty members, especially those at Catholic institutions, to enter into discussions on the causes of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, and to help them create curricular responses.

This year's conference focused on *Nostra Aetate*, as this October marks the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's declaration on the Catholic Church's relationship to non-Christian religions. The declaration devoted much of its text to Judaism, rejecting the belief that the Jews bear collective guilt for the death of Jesus, and condemning anti-Semitism at any time, by anyone.

> *This will be a great way to bring new dialogue into our classrooms.*

"This was an area of which not many of us had a deep understanding," said Deborah Brown, head of the history department at Sir Allan MacNab Secondary School. "We wanted to see how we could take that next step as educators to understand what our students need to know.

"It was a phenomenal conference. I was in awe to be in the same room and to hear from such acclaimed individuals and learn from them. I came back moved and powerfully changed."

Brown says a highlight of the conference for her was listening to a lecture by Father Patrick Desbois, who has devoted his life to researching the Holocaust, fighting anti-Semitism, and furthering relations between Catholics and Jews. Father Desbois is the grandson of a World War II French prisoner held in the Rawa Ruska Camp on the Poland-Ukraine border. He is a Catholic priest and president of Yahad – In Unum, a French organization he founded in 2004 dedicated to identifying and commemorating the sites of Jewish and Roma mass executions in eastern Europe during the war.

"After the sessions would end at 9 p.m., we would stay up talking about how we will use what we learned," Brown said.

"We are creating a learning team to discuss how we can better use rigorous academic research with our students, how we can interpret primary texts to gain a better understanding of religious and ethical choices and relationships in genocide studies.

"Our own stance was certainly enriched, and our understanding was deepened. This will be a great way to bring new dialogue into our classrooms."

Hamilton already has a rich history of Holocaust education. In partnership with the Hamilton Jewish Federation Holocaust Education Committee, many teachers participate in sessions to learn teaching strategies. They also take advantage of resources, including artifacts from World War II to share with students.

The annual Student Symposium on the Holocaust consists of a historical overview of the Holocaust and survivor testimony with a question-and-answer period.

The Holocaust committee also runs an Asper Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program, in which high school applicants take part in sessions on human rights and the Holocaust, as well as participate in a trip to Washington, D.C., including a day at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and they complete a community service project. ■

Was revenge justice? It's complicated, rabbi says

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Rabbi Steven Jacobs RACHEL LEHNER PHOTO

It's a little-known part of post-Holocaust history: After World War II, a small group of Jewish survivors, led by Abba Kovner, the poet and partisan leader, targeted Nazis for assassination. They took the ominous name *Hanokmim*, Hebrew for "the avengers," and took justice into their own hands.

But was taking revenge against Nazis a form of justice?

That "very complicated" issue was addressed Nov. 1 by Rabbi Steven Jacobs, a professor of Judaic studies at the University of Alabama, in a pre-Holocaust Education Week lecture presented at Bialik Hebrew Day School.

The stage for the Jewish avengers may have been set, Rabbi Jacobs noted, following World War I, when survivors of the Armenian genocide formed Operation Nemesis to kill Turkish leaders who had been responsible for roughly 1.5 million Armenian deaths.

The best known action by the *Nokmim* was on April 14, 1946, when members sneaked into a bakery and painted diluted arsenic on some 3,000 loaves of bread for the 12,000 German prisoners of war at the Langwasser internment camp near Nuremberg. About 1,900 Germans got "seriously ill," according to a report Rabbi Jacobs cited, and between 300 and 400 died.

Rabbi Jacobs quoted one of the avengers as saying this "was nothing compared with what we really wanted to do."

He also cited the 1993 book *An Eye for an Eye: The Untold Story of Jewish Revenge Against Germans in 1945* by John Sack, which detailed another episode: when the Communists took over Poland after the war, they recruited Jewish survivors of concentration camps and other institutions to run internment camps.

"It is estimated that between 60,000 and 80,000 Germans died during that period under the responsibility of Jews," Rabbi Jacobs said, though he did not say how they died.

(Sack's book was widely derided and discredited, with at least one prominent historian noting that the vast majority of those in charge of these camps were not Jews. The German publisher even cancelled the book.)

In any event, "I share this with you to remind you – to remind us – that history, our history, is not always what we wish it to be," Rabbi Jacobs said.

"The stories we tell ourselves omit that which makes us truly uncomfortable and avoid forcing us to confront those questions we would rather not answer," he added. "But I believe as a scholar that the way forward for us as Jews is to understand as completely as possible the past you are trying to uncover, warts and all, [and] recognize both our successes and the errors of our ways."

But was this justice, at a time when the world refused to exercise it?

Jacobs noted that rabbis throughout the ages have argued that revenge is up to God. Yet the Torah, he added, teaches of a person called the *goel hadam*, or the blood avenger.

Jacobs noted that Jonathan Sacks, the former chief rabbi of the British Commonwealth, argued the words actually translate as blood redeemer, "one who restores equilibrium to the world and rights the wrongs."

"Could we not argue then that the Armenians and Jews are blood redeemers of the world?" Rabbi Jacobs wondered. "Maybe. Maybe not."

Further quoting Rabbi Sacks, Rabbi Jacobs said Jews are not free to take the law into their own hands, and that "passion may not override due process of law."

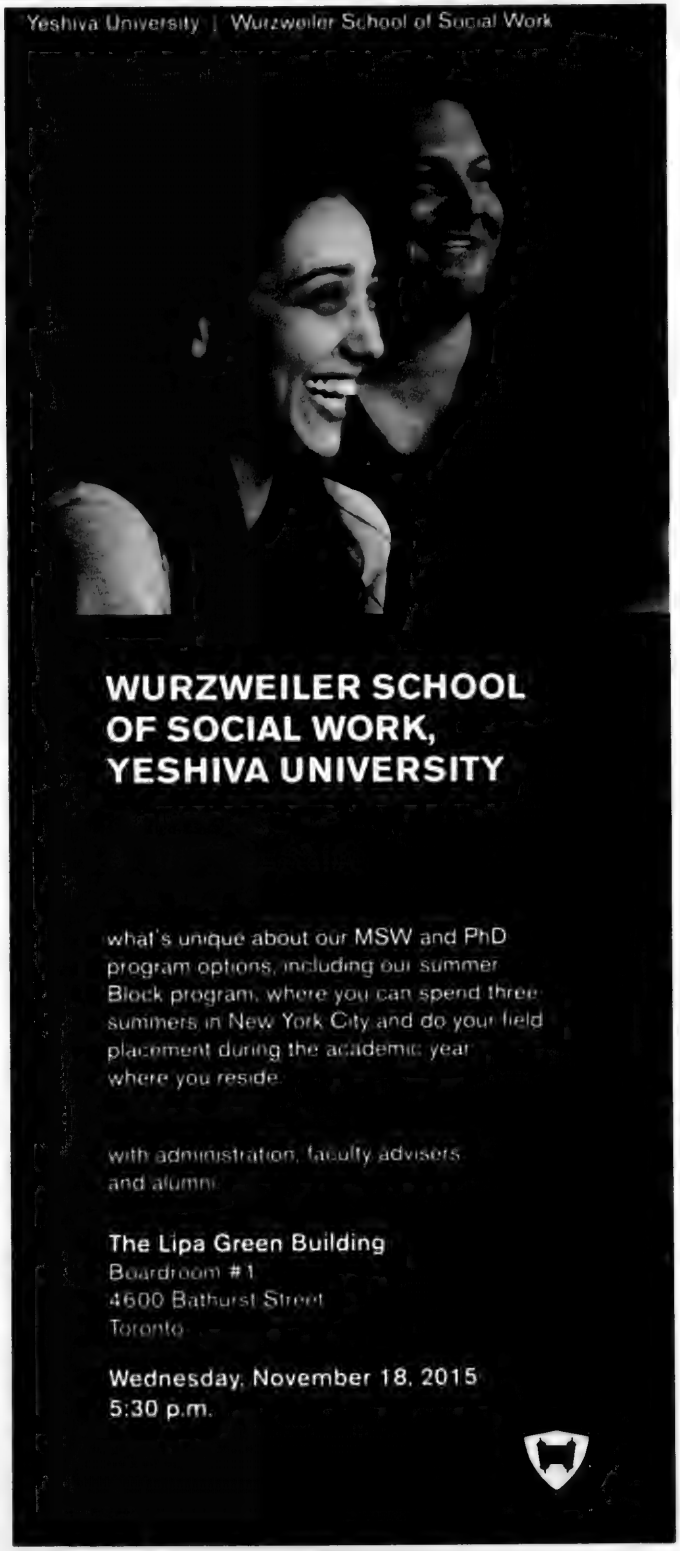
Wrongs, he said, must be punished only after a fair trial and not just on behalf of victims, but all of society.

So how to reconcile Jewish law with the fact that Jews took the law into their own hands after the Holocaust?

"We do so first by accepting the reality that what was then, with all its agonizing complexity, was then, and this is now," Rabbi Jacobs said. "Second, we refuse to cover over those aspects of our past which remain, at the very least, highly problematic, but equally force us to reject their solutions as our solutions, no matter what."

Jews, he said, must adhere to the rule of law or risk returning to "the law of the jungle, where survival of the fittest is dependent upon both individual and group violence."

The talk was presented by the Wierzbniker Society of Toronto, which marked, with candlelighting, the 73rd anniversary of the Nazi liquidation of the ghetto into which the Jews of the village of Wierzbnik had been herded and subsequently shipped to Treblinka. ■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Bernard Betel Centre marks 50 years of creative living

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

For 50 years, the Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living has been keeping Toronto seniors engaged in the community, and on Oct. 25, it opened its doors to kick off a year-long celebration in honour of its golden anniversary.

"It was an overwhelming and resounding success," said executive director Gail Gould of the open house event, which spotlighted Betel's past, present and future. And it brought out more than 600 seniors for a day filled with activities, music and dancing.

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), Toronto section, founded the Centre for Creative Living back in 1965. At the time, it had only 50 members. Eventually, the centre outgrew the NCJW and became its own autonomous organization under the leadership of its first executive director, Rhea Shulman.

Now Betel, as it's lovingly called, serves more than 5,000 seniors, including those who aren't able to leave their homes.

"It's about going where the client or community member is at," Gould said of the centre's Healthy at Home initiative. "These folks can't get out. They can't get to Betel, so we go to them."

Isaac Cohen and Barbara Zigler at the Oct. 25 celebration

For those who are well enough, Betel hosts an array of programs, from computer and fitness classes to dances and even an Israel trip.

It's about "empowering seniors to lead active, creative and healthy lifestyles in a Jewish environment," Gould said of her organization's mission.

It was easy to see this in action at the open house as men and women – speaking mainly in Hebrew, English and Russian – socialized and participated in various activities led by staff and volunteers throughout the day.

During the Oct. 25 event, Gould said that she and her staff rely on more than 400 volunteers, who contribute a combined 40,000 hours each year. That includes an entirely volunteer-based board of directors.

Along with Gould, representatives from all three levels of government addressed the crowd. Toronto Ward 10 Councillor James Pasternak shared greetings from Mayor John Tory, while MPP Monte Kwinter brought the same from Premier Kathleen Wynne. York Centre's MP-elect Michael Levitt also spoke.

Later in the day, the Toronto-based klezmer band Klez Konnection got members, staff, volunteers and visitors dancing. "We do a wild party here at the Betel Centre," said Gould, laughing.

Gould is currently in the process of organizing additional 50th anniversary events along with the planning committee's co-chair and board member Bonnie Baker.

"Whether we have lectures or trips or concerts, we have a variety of things that are in the works," Gould said. "And we hope the community will come out to enjoy and continue to celebrate." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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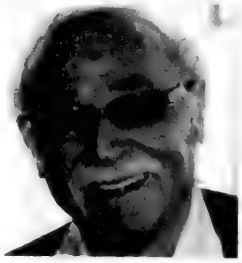
Boxing promoter was larger-than-life figure



Irving Ungerman

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Irving Ungerman fought his way out of the old Jewish neighbourhood of Kensington Market, both as a featherweight boxer and as a savvy businessman.

He found success in the poultry business and used his wealth to support charities in the Jewish community and beyond.

Along the way, he raised a family, taught them self-reliance and self-respect, helped countless individuals better their lots in life, managed nationally ranked boxers, and though a recipient of the Order of Ontario and the Diamond Jubilee Award, never lost the common touch. Ungerman passed away last week of a stroke at age 92.

Hundreds of mourners gathered at Beth Sholom Synagogue to pay their last respects, including a Toronto Police Service honour guard and an RCMP honour guard.

Ungerman was remembered as a larger-than-life figure, a bold, risk-taking entrepreneur with a heart of gold. Two of his daughters and several grandchildren delivered eulogies describing his profound and long-lasting impact on their lives.

Temmi Ungerman Sears said that despite several serious medical issues that plagued him in recent years, her father retained his boundless energy. "There was no one who could keep pace with this man," she said.

At age 15, he was a champion featherweight boxer at only 105 pounds. He never set aside his love of the sport, teaching it while serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II and working the corners in more than 100 fights subsequently. He managed Canadian champions to world title bids, she said.

Known for managing national champions George Chuvalo and Clyde Gray, Ungerman was inducted into the Canadian Boxing Hall of Fame in 1973.

At the same time, he was a proud Jew who supported Israel and he took pride in helping raise funds for the country during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. He also was involved in the wider community, and was one of the original directors of the Toronto Santa Claus Parade. Riding along in the parade and wearing a red nose, he'd hand out candy to the kids on the parade route. It's not clear who enjoyed it more, him or the kids, Ungerman Sears stated.

His generosity was legendary, she continued. Once while sharing a hospital room with a man named "George," he learned his roommate needed financial assistance for a specialized heart valve or his life would be at risk. He wrote a cheque for $35,000 to the hospital to help him.

He wasn't large in stature, but he was a giant of a man, Ungerman Sears said.

Shelley Sukerman, his other daughter, recalled her father as someone who "liked a good fight and never, never, never gave up."

His was "a life well lived. Most people just live their lives. You owned yours," she said of her father.

Several of Ungerman's grandchildren described the life lessons they absorbed from him. "Since day one, I was enrolled in the Irving Ungerman school of hard knocks," said grandson Jeremy Ungerman Sears.

Dylan Ungerman Sears recalled her grandfather was known as "the chicken man" and a "boxing legend."

Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich noted that Ungerman and his wife, Sylvia, were great benefactors of Beth Sholom. On meeting Ungerman in his office, he noted that it was brimming with photos and memorabilia that spilled out everywhere. It was "as if he had been everywhere, maybe all at once," Rabbi Flanzraich said.

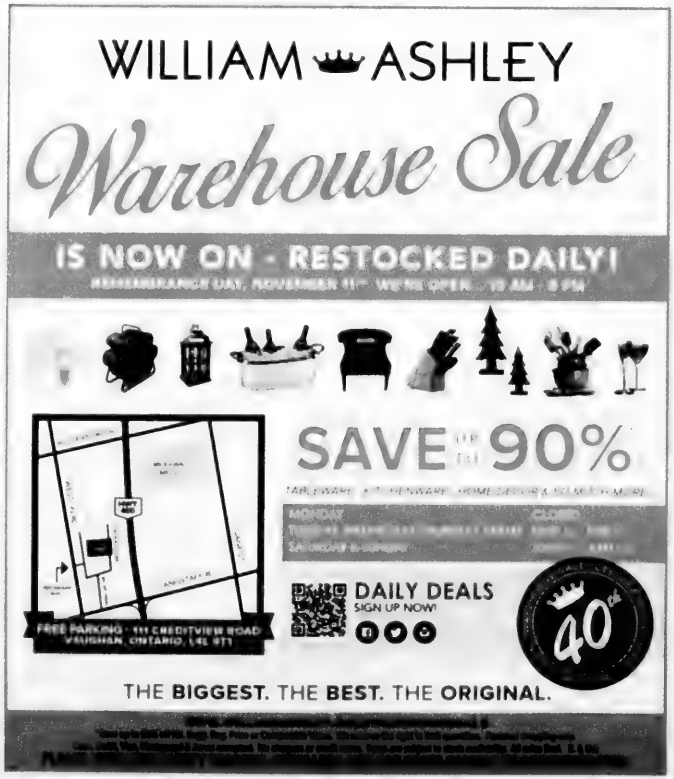
Ungerman was devoted to his family, including his brothers and sisters who predeceased him. He stood on his own and from an early age, learned "to fight and to squeeze everything from life," the rabbi said.

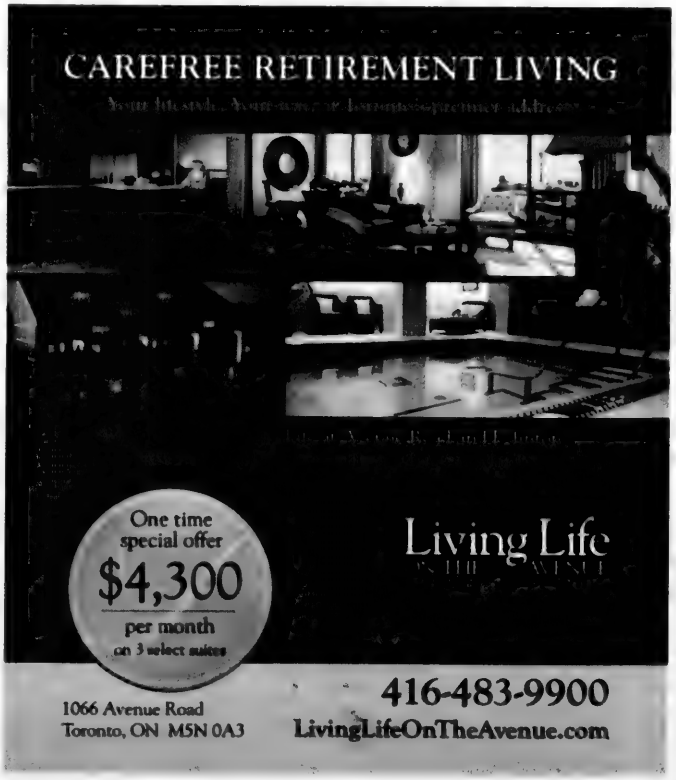
At least two of the fighters Ungerman managed attended the funeral – former Canadian welterweight champion Donovan Boucher and Canadian and Commonwealth welterweight champion Clyde Gray.

"Irv was the best," Gray said. "He was always there for you."

Gray, who fought in the 1960s and 1970s, said Ungerman helped support him by giving him a job as a truck driver, which permitted him to train in the afternoons. He arranged several world title fights, he added.

Evelyn Gray, Clyde's wife, said Ungerman "was the go-to guy." Even the Dundees, who managed Muhammad Ali, "came to Irv. He had the connections, the name, the ability. He had the fighters. He managed the two biggest fighters in Canadian history [Chuvalo and Gray]," she said. ■





GUEST VOICE

Baseball isn't the only thing that brings us together

Shoel Silver, Felicia Posluns and Ruth Ekstein

In the end, the Toronto Blue Jays failed to make it to the World Series. Nevertheless, the three months from August to October were tremendously exciting in Toronto, as the Jays began an unanticipated run toward the top of the American League.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the Jays' autumn was the way it brought the city together. Fans and non-fans alike were swept up in the passion. It was not uncommon to see total strangers high-fiving or even hugging, in reaction to heroics on the field or at bat. The feeling of unity was palpable.

The Blue Jays' advance coincided with the principal phase of the United Jewish Appeal campaign, which we have the honour to chair this year. Together with more than 600 volunteers and a group of dedicated professionals, we endeavoured to raise the funds that help more than 100 organizations and schools look after Jews in need today and secure a knowledgeable and caring Jewish community for tomorrow.

UJA's work encompasses four pillars of activity (that's three more Pillars than the Blue Jays had):

- We care for the vulnerable and those in need. Twenty-four thousand of us live below the poverty line, and many of our seniors live in isolation.
- We improve access to Jewish education and identity programs. From preschool through campus, we give our young people multiple paths to strengthen their connection to their Jewish roots.
- We improve the quality of life for Israelis and for Jews abroad facing conflict and anti-Semitism. In areas far from the centre of Israel or too close to rocket launchers, we enhance education and health care and help to stabilize communities and create opportunities for growth.
- We speak up for our community and for our brothers and sisters in Israel. The Jews of the GTA have interests and concerns, and we make the case on Parliament Hill, at Queen's Park, at city hall and to the media.

And the key is, we do all of it together. The United Jewish Appeal means Jews united to help each other. What brought Toronto together this fall were the exploits of a baseball team. What brings our community together year after year is the pull of a heritage thousands of years in the making, an innate sense of mutual responsibility, pride in the values and culture of a small people with a large profile and determination that the legacy we received will not end with us. What brings us together is the recognition that we are more than a community – we are a family.

Now, it's true that what our agencies do every single day doesn't happen in a stadium or in front of television cameras. And there are no cheering crowds. But when a volunteer delivers a meal to a Holocaust survivor living alone, or takes her to a social event; when a young woman learns a new skill and finds a job, or receives an interest-free loan to start a new business; when a child living through a rocket barrage on the Israeli border receives psychological counselling to help him cope, or a newly elected member of Parliament comes to understand that child's plight – each of these occasions and countless others are worthy of a high-five and a communal hug.

And it is United Jewish Appeal contributions that make it possible. Whether through our overseas partners, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Joint Distribution Committee, or the range of local agencies, schools and other affiliates in the UJA family, including Jewish Vocational Service, Jewish Family & Child, Jewish Addiction Community Services, Jewish Immigrant Aid Services and the Jewish community centres, if you are a donor, you are changing lives. If you aren't, it's not too late to join our team.

JAFI, JDC, JVS, JF&CS, JACS, JIAS, JCCs, and so many more. What a lineup. Go "J"s go! ■

Shoel Silver and Felicia Posluns are the chairs of this year's UJA annual campaign. Ruth Ekstein is chair of UJA's women's philanthropy.

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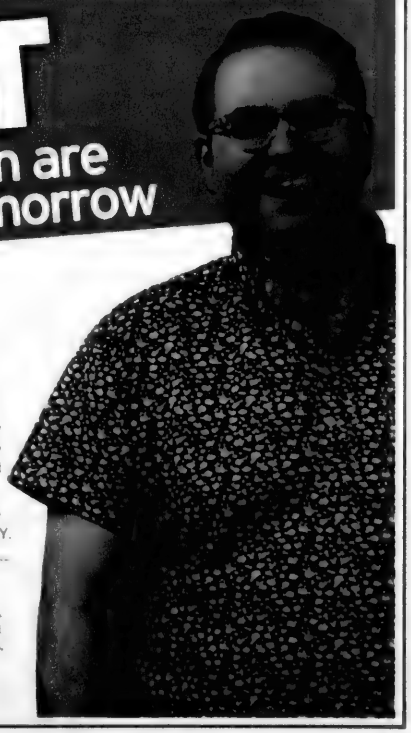

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NDPer tours death camp she joked about on Facebook

SHERI SHEFA
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Avi Benlolo, left, and Max Eisen at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies

Alex Johnstone, the Hamilton-area NDP candidate who was embroiled in controversy following the resurfacing of a Facebook comment in which she made a penis joke about an electrical fence at Auschwitz, joined the latest From Compassion to Action tour organized by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies during which she visited the notorious death camp.

In September, Johnstone, who ran in the recent federal election, made international news after a satirical online publication dug up a seven-year-old Facebook comment about Auschwitz's "infamous Pollish (sic), phallic, hydro posts."

Johnstone promptly apologized for the gaffe and told reporters, "I didn't know what Auschwitz was, or I didn't up until today."

When FSWC president and CEO Avi Benlolo heard the story, he invited Johnstone to join a 28-person delegation of law enforcement professionals, government officials, and Catholic school educators that travelled to Austria, Poland and Israel from Oct. 11 to 18.

Johnstone, who only joined the trip for the programming in Austria and Poland – which included a tour of Auschwitz and other historical sites related to the Shoah, and marked the first time she had ever travelled overseas – thanked Benlolo for the invitation, adding that the trip "had a deeply profound impact" on her.

"Some of the more profound moments was having the honour of meeting with Auschwitz survivor Max Eisen who shared his personal and horrific memories as we walked through the grounds," she said.

"Seeing the two tons of human hair from Auschwitz victims just gutted me. Walking along the electric fence, and seeing the ovens, you imagine all the people, all the moms, the dads, their children, the horrors that were enacted against them."

Benlolo, who has been leading these tours since 2010, said influential Canadians are invited on the tours to teach them about the devastating effect racism can have on humanity.

"Who are the front line people in our society? Who are the people who will respond to hate and crime and anti-Semitic attacks and need to have the best understanding? It is in our interest to have them educated and to understand the issues that we're dealing with as a community," Benlolo said.

"Obviously for the educators, it's the same thing. They're educating the next generation of students and we want them to understand the history and the legacy of the Holocaust and what Israel is dealing with on a daily basis. All of these people have a huge network of people around them and can influence them and that is the objective."

Moose Jaw Police Chief Rick Bourassa, who joined the tour, said although he had been taught about the Holocaust as a student, visiting the Auschwitz concentration camp gave him a deeper understanding.

"I'd seen the videos and the pictures and it is one thing to see those things at a distance without it being connected with someone and to understand intellectually what happened, but to actually be standing there, with Max, with a survivor, brought it to a whole new level of awareness," Bourassa said.

"It was almost a bit of a sick feeling I had in my stomach. For a moment I sensed what it must have felt like for those people who were going through those gates, not knowing what awaited them."

Benlolo said the tour, which ended in Israel, helped the delegates understand the Jewish community's reaction to anti-Semitism and anti-Israel rhetoric.

"We wanted them to understand why Israel reacts the way it does for security reasons, why it reacts the way it does to Iran, and why the Jewish community here gets upset about various contemporary issues, like campus anti-Semitism," Benlolo said.

Bourassa said the lessons he learned on the tour can be applied to Canadian society today.

"What it really brought home to me was the importance of inclusive communities and making sure that there aren't divisions, whether they be social, economical, psychological, physical, whatever those barriers are... It's so important we keep them removed."

Johnstone agreed, and said, "After seeing what hate can amount to, I'm very concerned about the rise in racism and anti-Semitism and hate in our world today. Hate can be found everywhere, from our speech to our actions. I walked away thinking that we have to work harder to dissipate the hate that exists in our society." ■

Zareinu students get ready to shine at annual show

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Thirteen-year-old Madison Tevlin, a former Zareinu Educational Centre student with Down syndrome, has defied the odds, as very few people with Down syndrome are ever able to sing.

Madison has earned her place in the spotlight, though, with more than seven million hits on her YouTube channel, a song recorded with Cody Simpson and O.A.R., and a live performance at the Special Olympics.

Madison's story is one of inspiration, dedication, passion, and effort – words that can also be applied to the staff and students of Zareinu.

Madison's mother, Grace Tevlin, said that when Madison was born, doctors told her "She may talk, she may not." From that moment on, Grace made communication a priority in Madison's life, and "Zareinu was a tremendous help in this process," she said.

Madison will be a keynote speaker and model in the 12th annual Zareinu Fashion Show, whose theme this year is *Luxe and Glamour*. It will be held Nov. 10 at Bellvue Manor in Vaughan.

Hosted by fashion icon Jeanne Beker, it will feature professional models alongside special-needs Zareinu students who will all take to the catwalk and model exclusive collections from a variety of prestigious Canadian and international designers, including Ines DiSanto, Ross Mayer, Versace, Strellson and Town Shoes.

The show is an opportunity for Zareinu children to shine in their own unique ways. There's never a dry eye in the house as guests cheer on these mini champions who have each overcome their own challenges to proudly strut, walk or wheel down the runway.

Zareinu is a school and treatment centre for children with physical and developmental challenges. For more than 25 years, it's provided individualized evidence-based programs to hundreds of students with special needs in supportive learning environments.

Two-year-old Zareinu student Darwin Joseph will be making her way down the runway with help from her father. Darwin has Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS), a genetic disorder that occurs in approximately one out of every 15,000 births. Its common characteristics include small hands and feet, abnormal growth and body composition (small stature, very low lean body mass, and early-onset childhood obesity), weak muscles at birth, insatiable hunger and intellectual disability.

Darwin Joseph as a flower girl at her aunt's wedding this past summer

"Darwin came to Zareinu when she was about 10 months old. She didn't move. She couldn't keep her trunk – torso – up and she couldn't put any weight on her legs," Zareinu's head physiotherapist, Ester Fink, told *The CJN*.

"Postural control or the ability to pull against gravity and maintain the body in space is necessary for the development of movement. Darwin, because of low muscle tone, could not resist gravity, so she couldn't stand or move in space. We worked on her trunk control, or the ability to hold herself up, without support. As she gained trunk control, we held her only by the legs and carefully moved her legs to challenge her ability to maintain her balance in space. And only after she developed some balance did she start moving on her own."

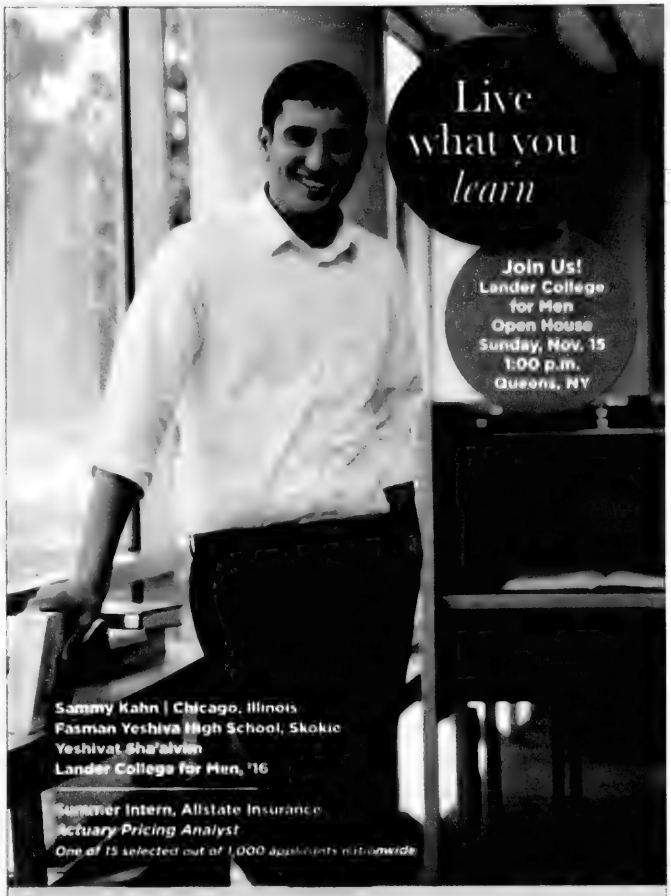
Therapy includes giving parents a structured home program. "We videotape and practise at school so the parents feel confident at home," Fink said.

"Zareinu has changed Darwin's world, my world and our outlook as to what we think Darwin can accomplish in life. Zareinu showed us that Darwin will walk, be potty trained and go to school. It was very hard to believe that in the darkest times right after the diagnosis," said her father, Mark Joseph.

Proceeds from this year's fashion show will support Zareinu's goal to expand community-based services.

"Our expansion of Zareinu classrooms in the Jewish day school system, for instance, can lead to an increase in opportunities for student to be included in the mainstream of that system," said spokesperson Jenna Greenberg. ■

For more information, visit www.zareinu.org



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Current violence part of a jihad, Israeli expert says

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT, HALIFAX

The latest violence in Israel over the last several weeks is a link in a long chain of jihad against Israel and Jews, Mordechai Kedar told a dozen Jewish community leaders in Halifax late last month.

The assistant professor from Bar-Ilan University was concluding a Canadian speaking tour Oct. 22 that took him to Regina and several Ontario centres, including Toronto, Kitchener and Hamilton. He's considered an academic expert on the Israeli-Arab population and is a researcher in Islam, Islamic movements and gender issues, Arabic mass media and popular culture in the Arab world.

"There is nothing different today than decades ago, but this is not at the level of mass killing of the intifadah of say, 14 years ago, when buses were blown up, causing a massive number of casualties. Today, the knife is fashionable because of the way ISIS uses it."

Fluent in English, Hebrew and Arabic, the 1998 PhD graduate from Bar-Ilan showed a series of Arab pictures and political cartoons stressing how that community sees itself – images of Arabs holding Jews at bay with knives and depicting triumph over Jews, with drawings of the Temple Mount in the background.

Jon Goldberg, left, executive director, Atlantic Jewish Council, and Mordechai Kedar in Halifax JOEL JACOBSON PHOTO

> *In every encounter between violent and non-violent groups, the violent always prevail.*

Photographs that appeared in the news media displayed signs at funerals of Arab "martyrs" killed while perpetrating attacks, stating "Killing brings us closer to Allah" and "Killing of Zionists is part of the worship of Allah."

"These are disseminated by the mass media and social media," Kedar said. "It is a holy war, but Israeli Jews who are without religion in their daily lives can't understand a holy war. They attribute the attacks on Jews and the hatred of Jews on economics, human rights and other issues."

He admitted that there are educated, modern Arabs who would live in peace and recognize Israel as a state, and they are not violent people.

"However, in every encounter between violent and non-violent groups, the violent always prevail... and the foundation is religion."

He stressed Israel's story of success, discussing how Israel attained its sovereignty, renewed its Hebrew language, and became a modern, democratic country with the longest life expectancy in the region.

"In every criteria, Israel is a story of great success," he noted.

"The Arabs hate each other, kill each other. They envy us and they hate us," he added.

"Arab countries think that if you project power and the readiness to use it, people won't mess with you. That is their mindset. If you're perceived to beg for peace, you're disrespected, humiliated, subjugated. But we know that when peace is resolved, you're respected."

He concluded that the support Israel has within its borders and from democratic nations throughout the world gives it power. ■

Correction

The headline on the Oct. 29 story about Jewish Federation of Ottawa vice-president Leslie Kaufman contained incorrect information. She is in urgent need of a liver transplant. *The CJN* apologizes for the error.

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Peace song, Isaiah's message featured in music video

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

On Nov. 11, Canadians will gather at cenotaphs, schools, churches, synagogues and other public places to mark the sacrifices of Canadian soldiers in armed conflicts around the world.

To make the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II even more significant, March of the Living Canada (MOL) is asking schools taking part in Remembrance Day activities to add the video of a unique peace song to their memorials – *Lay Down Your Arms*.

Written by a wounded Israeli veteran of the Yom Kippur War to honour his fallen comrades, with lyrics by a Canadian songwriter and a bridge by a local musician, the song "has Canadian content and a universal message," said MOL national director Eli Rubenstein.

It is a message that would be appreciated by Canadian soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice – that their efforts should lead to a world at peace, he said.

In the original Hebrew version, songwriter Doron Levinson incorporated text from the book of Isaiah, including the famous lines: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall no longer raise up arms against nation, neither shall they teach their children war anymore."

The March of the Living Children's Choir sings *Lay Down Your Arms* at Auschwitz on Yom Hashoah 2015.
EYNAT KATZ PHOTO

Working with Levinson's melody, lyricist Lisa Catherine Cohen updated and modernized the words rather than simply translate the Isaiah text. Harry Lewis wrote the bridge, said Rubenstein.

First recorded in Toronto more than 20 years ago by the Habonim Youth Choir, it was only recently made into a music video with new arrangements by Habonim Cantor Aviva Rajsky and guitarist Tom Bellman.

The recent version featured the March of the Living Children's Choir as well as the Habonim Youth Choir. It was performed on Holocaust Remembrance Day during a MOL ceremony at Auschwitz-Birkenau before 10,000 people. It was also performed at the Tempel Synagogue in Krakow and in Israel at the Mini-Israel park near Latrun, between Yom Hazikaron, which honours Israel's war dead, and Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day.

The music video included excerpts from those performances as well a rehearsal in Toronto.

Adding a unique element to the video, the Israel Museum gave permission to include images from the Dead Sea Scrolls, specifically the *Great Isaiah Scroll*, the oldest known version of the biblical book.

"In the video you see lines written 2,200 to 2,300 years ago, on cracked parchment," Rubenstein said. "It's interesting to think that in 2015, with all sorts of modern technology, we're reading something written in the hills of Judea 2,500 years ago. Look how powerful that message is.

"They remind us how far we have to go to build a world of peace."

In Cohen's updated English-language lyrics, the song ends with the stanza: "Somewhere deep inside the soldier, there's a dreamer/ Dreaming of a world of peace/ Lay down your arms/ Let time heal every wound/ And love will someday set us free."

The last line of the song is meant as a counterpoint to the cynical message the Nazis incorporated on an iron gate at Auschwitz, that work will set you free. And the line, "Every hand that holds a sword can hold a baby," is particularly relevant during the current "knife intifada," Rubenstein said.

MOL staff sent copies of the video and sheet music to schools, with the suggestion they play video of the song during Remembrance Day commemorations and learn the song for future memorial events.

"In a world still scarred by war and violence, with the threat of further turmoil looming on the horizon, the message of *Lay Down Your Arms* is as timeless and as needed as ever," Rubenstein stated. ■

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Veterans look back at World War II service

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Morris Polansky was a teenage farm boy living in Oxbow, Sask. when he made his way to Winnipeg to enlist in the Canadian Armed Forces. Only 19 at the time, he had wanted to volunteer the year before, but some grizzled veterans from World War I advised him to finish high school first. Likely they knew what he was getting himself into and that there was no hurry to get into the fight.

It was still 1940 and there was plenty of action to be seen by Polansky and others who volunteered to join the Canadian Armed Forces. Now 94, Polansky and fellow Jewish veterans Lorne Winer, 97, and Jerry Rosenberg, 93, recalled their military experiences, which saw intense fighting, close calls, the loss of comrades-in-arms and ultimately, victory over the Nazi beast.

As they have for years, the three will participate in Remembrance Day ceremonies on Nov. 11 to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Winer and Rosenberg will be part of a contingent of Jewish war veterans of the General Wingate Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, marking the moment at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre at Spadina and Bloor. Polansky will be at Toronto Centre for the Arts, in North York, where he will lay a wreath during the services, just as he has done for several years.

Their stories are typical of the thousands of young Jewish men who volunteered to serve during World War II. Jews enlisted in far greater numbers than their proportion of the population would have warranted in 1940s Canada. An estimated 10 per cent of Jews joined one of the branches of the Canadian Armed Forces.

For Polansky, at first it was the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps. Coming from rural Canada, he was mightily impressed with an ad that ran on CKY radio in Winnipeg that announced the army was looking for 400 truck drivers. "I could hardly wait," he said.

Pretty soon afterwards, however, he transferred into a unit that maintained and repaired electrical devices, including portable generators used in field medical units.

The closest he came to a life and death experience was when in late 1943 the German air force bombed the transport ship he was on, en route to Italy. Luckily most of the soldiers were successfully evacuated in lifeboats before the ship sank, he said. Polansky saw duty in Italy. His unit was later transferred to the fighting in Belgium and Holland.

Rosenberg's military service was entirely at sea. Unusual for most Jewish recruits, who chose the air force or the army, Rosenberg enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy in 1940 and saw duty as a signal man on board a variety of corvettes. The small warships saw convoy duty, escorting merchant vessels from Canada to Britain. The ships were targeted by German submariners, and Winer was part of convoy SC 42 (the 42nd slow convoy), which was devastated by Nazi wolf packs that preyed on lightly defended ships. There was 64 ships in the convoy and only four escorts, including Rosenberg's corvette, he said.

Arrayed against them was a group of 14 U-boats. One or two subs would attack and draw off the defenders, recalled Rosenberg, and then other U-boats would come in and attack the merchant ships. At the end of the engagement, 16 merchant ships were sunk and two others were damaged.

Jewish war veterans, from left, Jerry Rosenberg, Morris Polansky and Lorne Winer served in the Canadian Armed Forces during World War II. PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

Rosenberg, luckily, escaped that fate. "I was never on a ship that was sunk," he said. But one incident came pretty close. A miscommunication between the captain on the bridge and a fire-control officer below decks, who spoke through communication tubes, led the officer to release depth charges set for 60 feet while the ship was travelling at only six knots. The depth charges exploded almost below the ship and lifted the stern clear out of the water, Rosenberg said.

Winer, too, was no stranger to friendly fire incidents. Arriving in France on D+30, 30 days after the June 6, 1944 D-Day invasion of Normandy, he was a member of the Second Canadian Survey Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery.

Soon after arrival, he was at the front, participating in the battle to liberate Caen. The town was pulverized during the war, but the closest his unit came to destruction was during the many sorties by Allied air forces, which mistakenly dropped bombs on his unit, killing Canadian soldiers, he said.

Winer's unit helped liberate Caen and then was part of the battle to trap a German army at Falaise. He saw action for the rest of the war as Canadian forces headed north, eventually liberating Holland.

He survived, but many others did not. He recalls meeting fellow Jewish Canadian, Harry Black, in England and spending some time with him in Cardiff, Wales. Black had enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force and by the time they met, he was on leave after having flown multiple missions. Most of his friends had been killed and Black told Winer he didn't expect to survive much longer. Sure enough, soon after returning to duty, he was pronounced missing in action, Winer recalled.

The war ended in May 1945, 70 years ago, but Canadians haven't forgotten.

For the past 11 years prior to Remembrance Day, Polansky has been a fixture at Yonge and Eglinton, where he hands out poppies. "It's surprising how many people come up and thank you for what you've done," he said.

Winer, who participates at the Bloor JCC ceremonies, said passers-by take an interest in proceedings. "When I wear my beret and uniform, I have a lot of people come over to me and thank me," he said. ■

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Memoirs provide lessons for youths

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

The evening, held at Montreal's Sofitel Hotel, also saw the announcement of a new technological tool intended to deepen understanding of the Holocaust, according to particular interests.

Azrieli unveiled Re:Collection, an interactive multimedia platform, which is expected to be fully operational at the end of the year for both desktop and mobile devices. Guests had a chance to try it themselves on tablets provided, with the assistance of the program's digital platform manager Tim MacKay. (The Azrieli Foundation held a similar event Oct. 22 at the Carlu in Toronto.)

Users can explore the first-hand accounts of survivors – 15 of the authors are included for now – through memoir excerpts, video clips, photos and many other materials collected. They can relate these individual stories to historical themes, such as the prewar life, ghettos, deportation and the camps, as well as more universal themes like family, religion, discrimination and immigration.

This platform also allows for connections to be made among the survivors who share common experiences. Timelines and maps can be created to put information in context.

"We are honoured that they have entrusted us with their legacies," said Azrieli.

Her Polish-born father, who passed away in 2014, regarded memoir publication as "a second liberation" for his fellow survivors, freeing them to tell their stories without fear.

These first-hand accounts provide lessons for youth today, the Azrieli Foundation believes, not only in the dangers of racism, but in courage and resilience.

Vertes, a vigorous 91 who was born into a poor family in Hungary, said he hesitated for many years to write his memoirs, worried about his "broken English" and the buried memories it would awaken.

"It took me 18 months of sleepless nights to finish," said Vertes. He is grateful for the professional polishing the Azrieli Foundation gave his manuscript, and especially the patience and kindness of its staff. Vertes figures more than 800 phone calls and more than 4,000 emails were exchanged before the book was off the press.

Parisian-born Muguette Myers signs copies of her memoir *Where Courage Lives* at its launch.
JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

As the title indicates, Vertes felt completely alone during the Holocaust. A shoemaker by trade, Vertes was 20 in 1944 when the Nazis occupied Hungary.

He escaped a forced labour detail and survived by assuming a false identity. His liberation was short-lived: he was captured by the new Soviet regime and forced into two years of hard labour.

He became very ill and remembers seeing after his recovery the grave that had been dug for him.

After the 1956 revolution, Vertes and his wife Vera and their baby son George made a new, but not easy, life in Montreal. The freedom from fear was what he most appreciated here. Vertes' greatest joy is that George, their only child, became a doctor, and he now has three grandchildren.

Last month, Vertes received the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award in recognition of his long volunteer service, speaking to young people and helping many survivors apply for German reparations.

Myers, née Szpajzer, was born in Paris in 1931 to Polish parents. Her memoir is as much a tribute to her strong and resourceful widowed mother as it is about herself, she said.

"My brother and I survived thanks to her," said Myers. Her mother hid with the children, her mother and a sister in the village of Champlost where the people sheltered them. But her mother decided to return to Paris in the summer of 1940 just as the city was in chaos.

Myers, who immigrated to Montreal in 1947 and later became a translator, returned to Champlost 10 years ago to honour four residents as Righteous Among the Nations for hiding her family.

Among the other 11 new titles is the French translation of Montrealer Arthur Ney's memoir *L'Heure W*. As a young teen, Ney was caught up in both the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the Warsaw Uprising. ■

Lily Kim tries to keep kosher

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Also around a decade ago, after hearing a talk by Holocaust scholar Doris Bergen, who now teaches history at the University of Toronto, Kim decided to do another master's degree. Seeking to study the Holocaust specifically, she focused on Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German Lutheran pastor and theologian who was executed for his staunch resistance to the Third Reich.

"I was interested in resistance to Hitler," Kim explained. "Most who did resist were professing Christians."

Asked how she feels about the touchy view that the Holocaust was carried out in the main by practising Christians, she said, "I agree." But she qualified that by adding: "It was by people who called themselves Christians."

Recent anti-Israel boycotts and sanctions by Protestant churches make her "sad," she said.

Though raised in a Baptist tradition, Kim said she tries to keep kosher, lights Sabbath candles on Friday nights, and observes Jewish holidays. She even attempts to read the Bible in Hebrew. Her family has been supportive.

Between the two religions, "I take away the best of both." ■

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In east Jerusalem, Jews and Arabs hunker down

BEN SALES
JTA, JERUSALEM

Israeli police guarding the Mount of Olives cemetery look over a wall at Palestinian children running by on the street below in the east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Ras al Amud, on Oct. 21. HADAS PARUSH/FLASH90 PHOTO

To get to the Jewish compound in the eastern Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan, residents arrange in advance for an armoured van to pick them up at a spot adjacent to the walls of the Old City.

With a metal grate over its windshield and an armed guard sitting beside an armed driver, the van rumbles for seven minutes along steep, bumpy roads lined with Arabic graffiti. It stops next to a police van, across from a six-storey building towering over the street. An Israeli flag hangs from a window.

An armed guard stands at the door; a second sits inside. In an adjacent room, a group of Israel Border Police officers relax as they eat their lunch. When the children who live there want to play, they ascend to the roof, where there's a small playground surrounded on three sides by a metal cage.

The building is the largest structure in what its residents call Yemenite Village, a collection of buildings that is home to religious Jews who have lived in this part of Silwan since 2004. The enclave began with just a few families, but will expand to 22 in the coming months. Providing private security for them and residents of other nearby Jewish enclaves costs the Israeli government up to $16 million (US) a year, according to Daniel Luria, the director of Ateret Cohanim, an organization devoted to strengthening the Jewish presence in Arab areas of Jerusalem.

The number of Jews living in Arab neighbourhoods of Jerusalem's Old City and its environs has increased by 40 per cent since 2009, according to Ir Amim, an organization that advocates for Silwan's Arab residents. Some 2,800 Jews now live in the area, which residents refer to as the Holy Basin, a fraction of the nearly 200,000 Jews who live in eastern Jerusalem as a whole, almost all of them in Jewish areas built after the 1967 war that form a ring around the city's Arab neighbourhoods.

As the Jewish population in eastern Jerusalem has grown, so have tensions with its Arab neighbours. Both sides complain about frequent harassment from the other, from stone-throwing and Molotov cocktails to police abuse. Neither side feels safe walking the streets, and both insist they're not going anywhere – no matter how bad the violence gets.

"It'll be like this all of our life," said Kassem Nader, an Arab cab driver. "It will go up, go down, there will never be peace. We got to a place where you can't walk the street."

The Jews inside the Holy Basin consider it an inseparable part of Israel's capital and see no problem living there. Yishai Fleisher, who was born in Israel and raised in New Jersey, moved in 2011 with his family from the West Bank settlement of Beit El to Ma'ale Hazeitim, a Jewish settlement inside the Arab neighbourhood of Ras al-Amud, adjacent to the Mount of Olives.

"We think we're living in the ancestral homeland and we think we are protecting Jerusalem from being overrun," said Fleisher, a columnist and radio host who appears regularly on *Al Jazeera*. "One could conceive of us as settlers living dangerously amongst Arabs, or one could see us the way we see ourselves – as Jewish people coming back to our ancestral homeland, living in the most natural place that we could be."

Down the street from the Yemenite Village, Abdullah Abu Nab, a handyman and father of five whose family has lived on this street for generations, looks weary. The heavy Israeli security presence, placed there to prevent terrorism and protect the Jewish residents, has created an atmosphere of fear, he said. Israeli security forces have stopped his children from playing in the street, and Abu Nab says Arab kids have been punched by police.

In the past, "you would hardly feel them, see them," Abu Nab said. "Now there are more soldiers than neighbours. Now every day is crazy."

Arab residents complain that they are neglected by the authorities even as millions are spent to protect their Jewish neighbours. Although it's only blocks away from Jewish western Jerusalem, the city's Arab half looks different. Many of its dirty, narrow streets lack sidewalks, signage or proper paving. Trash collection is spotty, with piles of garbage gathering outside homes. According to a report by Ir Amim, as of 2012, 75 per cent of Jerusalem's approximately 300,000 Arabs live below the poverty line.

East Jerusalem has been experiencing frequent unrest since last summer, when Jewish extremists murdered an Arab teenager, Mohammad Abu Khdeir, in retaliation for the murder of three Jewish-Israeli teens. Since then there have been intermittent riots and what Jewish residents describe as constant stone-throwing at their apartments.

In response, Israel has closed off exits from Arab neighbourhoods and placed checkpoints on their roads. One checkpoint, a row of cinderblocks manned by a Border Police unit, sits just yards from Fleischer's apartment complex.

Individual residents also take their own precautions. Fleisher, Luria and others carry guns, and many have rock-proofed their windows. But Fleisher and his wife, Malkah, insist their life is mostly normal. Their biggest problem of late, they said, has been traffic jams from the road closures. Their eldest daughter now finishes school a half-hour earlier on Fridays because of the congestion, and makes sure to go to the bathroom before the ride home.

"We get information about how to travel, how to come back home, live as much as possible a normal life here," Fleisher said. "The change here hasn't felt as dramatic because we are from the get-go more prepared."

Arab Jerusalemites have many of the same complaints. Nader said drives that used to take 10 minutes now take two hours. His block is dotted with checkpoints, and a soldier recently held him at gunpoint and demanded to see identification. He worries that when his two young adult sons leave the house, they'll be mistaken for terrorists and shot. Save for work, he hasn't gone out in a week.

"They'll shoot someone who walks in the street," he said. "The situation is scary. They began with knives, [and] it's scary for everyone."

Neither side expects conditions to improve soon. Jews and Arabs both express a desire for normal relations, but both also seem resigned to the possibility that violence will continue for years or decades.

"We're cousins, man, we're sons of Abraham," Nader said. "The young generation doesn't want to get close. It wants to build a fence in the neighbourhoods instead of getting to know each other." ■

Israel returns bodies of Palestinian attackers

LINDA GRADSTEIN
JERUSALEM

Thousands of Palestinian mourners filled the streets of the villages of Sair and Surif near the West Bank town of Hebron, which has become the focal point of Palestinian attacks on Israeli soldiers in the past month. The bodies of Raed Jaradat, 22, and Mahmoud Ghneimat, 20, were released to the Palestinian Authority on the morning of Nov. 1 and the funeral was held that afternoon.

Jaradat was shot last week after he stabbed and injured a 19-year-old Israeli soldier. The circumstances surrounding Ghneimat's death, however, are less clear. Israeli officials said he had attempted a stabbing attack, but nobody was wounded, and Palestinians denied the version.

The bodies of both men were carried in a full military procession out of the hospital. Palestinian officials said Israel promised to return the bodies of five other attackers the same day, but said Israeli officials reneged on the promise. Israeli officials privately said that the Palestinians had reneged on promises not to hold mass public funerals.

On Oct. 30, Israeli officials returned the bodies of five attackers, all between the ages of 15 and 17, who were buried in an emotional joint funeral. About 20 Palestinians have been killed in the Hebron area since the beginning of October, almost all of them shot dead during attempted or actual attacks on Israeli soldiers. After the funerals, protesters threw rocks at Israeli soldiers.

Last month, Israel announced that it would not turn over the bodies of Palestinians killed attacking Israelis. Former foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman, head of the Yisrael Beytenu party, sharply attacked the government's decision to change its mind.

"This is a wrong step, meant to appease the terrorists, and it is akin to paying a ransom to those who threaten Israel. It is a shameful surrender to the Palestinians' threats, one that will not only fail to bring about quiet, but will bring about an increase in terrorism."

Palestinians however say that the decision to release the bodies is meant to calm the situation in Hebron and could have the desired effect.

"From a religious point of view, it is imperative to bury the dead," Mohammed Abu Aktesh, responsible for all visitors to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, told *The Media Line*. "It gives respect to the dead and to their families. If they are not buried near their families it is a tragedy for them."

> *Holding the bodies goes against international law and morality*
> **Ami Ayalon**

According to Islam, burial must take place as quickly as possible in a Muslim cemetery, after the body is washed and wrapped in shrouds.

From the viewpoint of Jewish law, the question of whether to release bodies is not a religious question, but a political one.

"There is no ownership of a dead body whether it is the body of a Jew or a Muslim," Rabbi Herzl Hefter, head of the Harel Beit Midrash in Jerusalem, said. "You can't treat the bodies of terrorists with disrespect, and you should bury them, but there is no Jewish law that says the bodies have to be returned for burial. That is a foreign policy decision and the state is sovereign here."

Former senior Israeli intelligence officials say there is no proof that holding onto the bodies helps stop attacks on Israelis.

"We closely investigated this when I was in charge of the Shin Bet (the Israeli intelligence service) and we came to the conclusion that holding onto the bodies does not give us any advantages or intelligence assets," Ami Ayalon, who was the head of the Shin Bet from 1996 – 2000 ,and advocates an Israeli withdrawal from most of the West Bank told *The Media Line*. "Holding the bodies goes against international law and morality."

The Islamist Hamas in the Gaza Strip is believed to be currently holding two Israelis – an Ethiopian named Avera Mengistu and a Bedouin who has not been named. Both men were believed to be captured after they willingly entered Gaza, and Israel has said it will not release any bodies or live prisoners in exchange for them. In addition, Hamas is holding the remains of two Israeli soldiers killed in the summer of 2014 during the fighting between Israel and Hamas. ■

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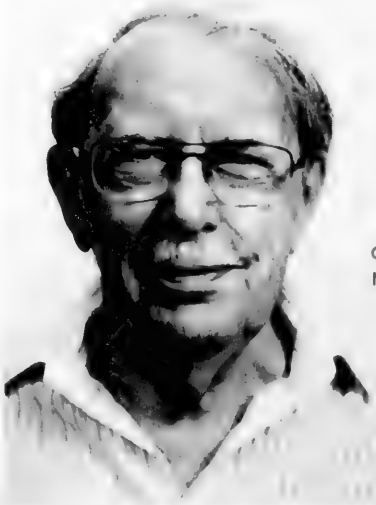

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OPINION

Dear President Abbas: Stop trying to kill us

David Horovitz

President Abbas, if you truly care about your people, you need to tell them to stop stabbing us.

They've killed about a dozen Israelis in the last month or so, and maybe three times that number of Palestinians have died in the attempt – suicidal stabbers, kamikaze knifers.

You've not condemned them. In fact, you've encouraged them – while simultaneously peddling the double speak that we've been killing them in cold blood. You've publicly declared that "every drop of blood that has been spilled for Jerusalem" is clean and pure and blessed. You've reassured each new prospective killer that "every martyr will reach Paradise, and everyone wounded will be rewarded by Allah."

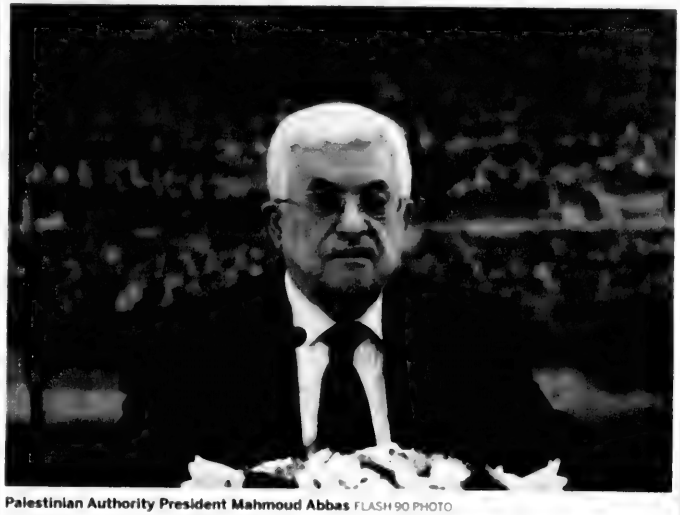
You obviously don't care about our people, who have had the temerity to build a thriving Jewish state in our historic homeland, and who you lie about and incite against. But since your people understandably seek their own independence, and to be freed from our rule, you need to tell them that trying to kill us one at a time with knives and screwdrivers and whatever else comes to hand is as counterproductive and doomed as the long series of previous efforts to massacre and terrorize us into leaving – the conventional wars, and the suicide bombings, and the rockets, and the car-rammings, and the relentless effort to demonize and delegitimize and isolate us internationally.

The path to the statehood and independence you seek is actually relatively straightforward. It was wide open in 1947 – all your predecessors had to do for a first-ever Palestine was accept a revived Israel. Instead, they opted for war and futile, bloody, tragic self-sabotage. Today, it's a case of convincing Israel that it is safe for us to partner with you. Convincing us, to paraphrase president Bill Clinton at the Rabin rally on Oct. 31, that the risks of peace are less severe than the risks of walking away.

Step one in that process of persuasion: Stop trying to kill us. Stop the stabbings. Stop the encouragement of the stabbings. Stop.

Here's the thing: much of the world has been convinced that we're the Goliath to your David. That super-strong Israel, a regional superpower, should be eminently capable of taking those U.S. president-recommended risks for the cause of your people's statehood and our own legitimacy and tranquility.

Even viewed in the narrow context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however, that's a short-sighted assessment. We all saw Hamas partially incapacitate this country for 50 days last summer – and that was a Hamas restricted to Gaza and arming itself through the cracks of our security blockade. A West Bank-controlled Hamas would fully paralyze Israel.



Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas FLASH 90 PHOTO

And if you look at the Goliath-David equation in the wider context – in the context of tiny Israel on the western edge of the vicious, shifting, unpredictable and weapons-filled Middle East – then it's a frankly ridiculous misrepresentation. Israel is not about to render itself still more vulnerable to extremism on three sides, and with only the sea on the fourth. Better press coverage and warm messages of support from the international community are somewhat inadequate compensation for national suicide.

The irony, President Abbas, is that most of us want to partner your people to statehood. We don't want to rule over you. We know it's a dreadful way for you to live. And imposing it corrodes us. We feel a resonant historical link to biblical Judea and Samaria, but most of us would much rather have a smaller Israel which boasts a Jewish majority and full equality than a larger Israel, encompassing the West Bank, that loses its Jewish character, its democracy, or both.

Yet just like your duplicitous predecessor, you're making it impossible for us to attempt that partnership.

You may think you're making headway with the UN efforts and the international court bids and all the other legal and diplomatic and media pressure to try to impose your state upon us without negotiating viable modalities, but you're not. Unfortunately, quite the reverse.

> *The irony, President Abbas, is that most of us want to partner your people to statehood*

We tried the Oslo process, and were rewarded with terrorism. We tried unilateralism, and were rewarded with rockets and tunnels. So now we're hanging tough – protecting ourselves as best we can, insistently maintaining that security blockade on Gaza, and insistently maintaining the military presence in the West Bank without which we would right now doubtless be facing another onslaught of suicide bombers.

It's not that we adore and embrace the world-view of our endlessly serving prime minister. We don't, most of us, grimly accept his bleak reported assertion to the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee last week that "Israel will have to live by the sword forever." We certainly will live by the sword for as long as we must, but we'd much rather not. We'd much rather not send our children to the front lines to protect us for generation after generation. We feel, many of us, that there is more we could do to help begin to create a climate in which peace-making is less risky, to help begin the lengthy process of reconciliation and tolerance that, maybe, one day, could enable us to peacefully share this bloodied land. But unlike well-intentioned American leaders of past and present, we do not have the luxury of blinding ourselves to the consequences of taking ill-judged and premature risks in that supreme cause of peace-making.

For all your despicable false accusations against us, your advanced years, and your weakness, you, President Abbas, still have more power than most anybody else to help advance the gradual process of moderation that is crucial to realizing your own people's aspiration for statehood. You are best placed to tell your people that the Jews have legitimacy here too. That the disputed land must be shared. That Jerusalem is holy to all monotheistic religions. That despite your rhetorical attempted land grab, the Old City – where Al-Aqsa sits, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre sits, and the Temple Mount and Western Wall sit – is not yours and yours alone.

They won't like to hear it. Fed a relentless diet of lies for generations, they won't easily believe it. They won't like you for telling them. But that's sometimes what leadership is about – taking your constituents, even against their will, in a better direction for their own best interests.

You should tell your people the inconvenient truth about the Jews and their history in these parts. Far from encouraging them to stab us, you should tell them that the sooner they stop, the sooner we can start the long process of building trust – the necessary prerequisite to compromise and Palestinian independence.

Sadly, I don't for a second think you're going to do this. I fear you're going to be remembered, just like your unlamented predecessor, as a Palestinian leader who failed his people because he lacked the guts to tell them the hard, inconvenient facts. And in so doing, pushed off their independence, and forced us to live by the sword, for who knows how many more years.

No, President Abbas, God does not reward those who spill the blood of innocents. There are no killing fields on the path to Paradise. If you care about your people, you should be telling them to preserve lives, not take them. Our lives and theirs.

And really, in what kind of a crazy world was it necessary for me to write this? ■

David Horovtiz is founding editor of the Times of Israel.
Timesofisrael.com

Thousands gather in Tel Aviv to remember slain prime minister Yitzhak Rabin

JTA
TEL AVIV

An estimated 100,000 people remembered prime minister Yitzhak Rabin at a Tel Aviv rally marking the 20th anniversary of his assassination that featured speeches by U.S. President Barack Obama and former president Bill Clinton.

On Oct. 31, at the plaza bearing Rabin's name, Clinton praised Rabin's willingness to take risks for peace and exhorted the crowd to finish his work. Clinton guided Israeli-Palestinian negotiations when Rabin was prime minister that led to the Oslo Accords in 1993.

"The next step will be determined by whether you decide that Yitzhak Rabin was right," Clinton said. "That you have to share the future with your neighbours. That you have to stand for peace. That the risks of peace are not as severe as the risks of walking away from it."

Rabin was assassinated Nov. 4, 1995 following a pro-peace rally at the same plaza. His assassin, Jewish extremist Yigal Amir, opposed Rabin's goal of Israeli-Palestinian peace.

In a video message, Obama called Rabin a leader who "understood the dangers Israel faces, but he also said the Palestinians are not to be ruled over forever by force.

"Yitzhak speaks to us still," Obama said. "Let us demonstrate that we oppose violence and extremism of any kind, and let us exhaust every opening for the peace we know is just and possible."

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin called on Israelis to mend their internal social rifts. "Israel's democracy has not ceased to realize its strength and resilience," he said. ■

Rabbinical Council of America bans ordination and hiring of women

JTA
NEW YORK

The Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), the main modern Orthodox rabbinical group, formally adopted a policy prohibiting the ordination or hiring of women rabbis.

The policy announced Oct. 30 by the RCA came after a direct vote of its membership.

The resolution states: "RCA members with positions in Orthodox institutions may not ordain women into the Orthodox rabbinate, regardless of the title used; or hire or ratify the hiring of a woman into a rabbinic position at an Orthodox institution; or allow a title implying rabbinic ordination to be used by a teacher of Limudei Kodesh in an Orthodox institution.

"This resolution does not concern or address non-rabbinic positions such as Yoatzot Halachah(advisers on Jewish law), community scholars, Yeshiva University's Graduate Program for Women in Advanced Talmudic Study, and non-rabbinic school teachers," the resolution concludes. "So long as no rabbinic or ordained title such as "Maharat" is used in these positions, and so long as there is no implication of ordination or a rabbinic status, this resolution is inapplicable."

Maharat is an acronym meaning female spiritual, legal and Torah leader. It is a designation granted by Yeshivat Maharat, an institution for women in Riverdale, N.Y. founded by Rabbi Avi Weiss.

In 2010, following the establishment of Yeshivat Maharat, the RCA issued a resolution on women's communal roles stating that the RCA "reaffirms its commitment to women's Torah education and scholarship at the highest levels, and to the assumption of appropriate leadership roles within the Jewish community. We strongly maintain that any innovations that impact the community as a whole should be done only with the broad support of the Orthodox rabbinate and a firm grounding in the eternal *mesorah* (tradition) of the Jewish people."

A follow-up 2013 resolution on Yeshivat Maharat, as it ordained its first cohort of maharats, said: "Due to our aforesaid commitment to sacred continuity, however, we cannot accept either the ordination of women or the recognition of women as members of the Orthodox rabbinate, regardless of the title. The RCA views this event as a violation of our *mesorah* and regrets that the leadership of the school has chosen a path that contradicts the norms of our community."■

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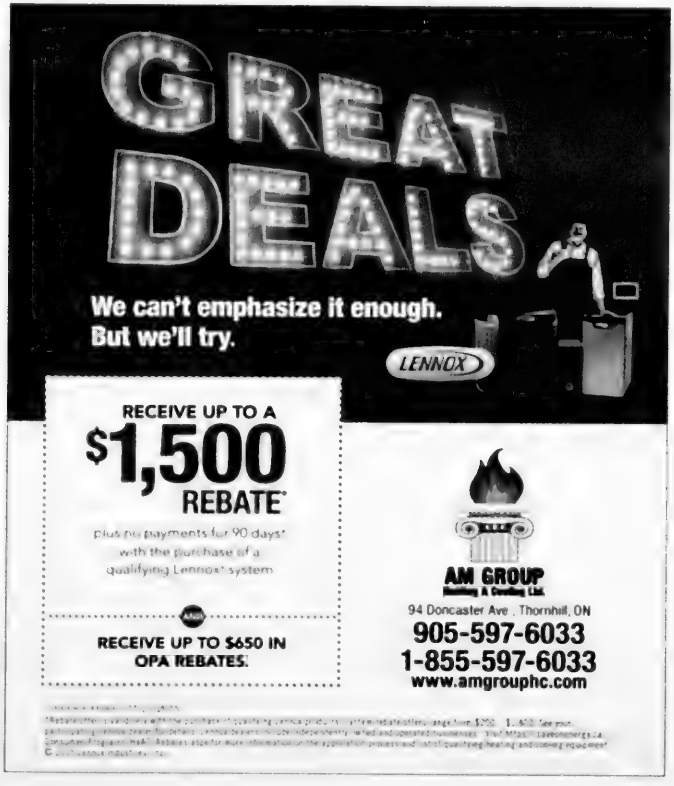

OPINION

Jerusalem, from a different point of view

Hanan Rubin

Sirens always make me pause. I fall silent and count one off, praying that there won't be another. Because two sirens, as we used to say, are not women in labour.

Somehow, the rise of conflict in Jerusalem always comes along with the rising temperatures. But after the meetings, the touring politicians, the dramatic headlines, there comes the first rain, and everything calms down. Then the countdown begins for next summer.

Some, though, aren't content with just counting the days. Jeremy made aliyah from Washington D.C. six years ago. A reserve paratrooper, he rides his bike to work, each time reassuring his mother, thousands of miles away, that he wasn't anywhere near the most recent attack. Recently, he joined a crowd of 5,000 to watch rapper Matisyahu perform beneath the Old City walls. "Jerusalem If I Forget You gets a whole new meaning these days," he tweets.

Michal is a mother of four. After putting her children to bed, she goes downtown, where she volunteers for a group seeking out dialogue with angst-filled youths bent on revenge. To her ever-concerned sister, she vows never to leave Jerusalem, with its crisp, cool air and still-low crime rates. It's her husband who drops off the kids at school the following morning, where they are taught about the complexities of living in a mixed city, where you have to defend yourself with one hand and reach out to your would-be enemies with the other.

Ibrahim is a Hebrew University law student, and a resident of Ras el-Amud, a Palestinian suburb shaken by recent events. Intimidating glares by Hamas supporters notwithstanding, he goes online every day, trying to convince people to stop the cycle of violence.

Then there's Batia. She is an ultra-Orthodox woman. Every day she walks to work at City Hall. Despite having recently bought a canister of tear gas as a precaution, she prefers to put her faith in God, and in the ubiquitous policemen.

Jerusalem keeps going not through pompous statements, but through the hard work and devotion of its people. When things started getting really bad, I put out a call for an emergency meeting of Jerusalem civil society organizations. Within three hours, representatives from 33 organizations sat around a conference table at City Hall. It came as no surprise; even during "normal" times, the number of people willing to sign up for civilian "reserve duty" is astounding.

There are teenagers handing out Israeli flags. Elderly people handing out small gifts to security personnel. Psychologists supporting youths in distress and activists helping out local businesses. These ordinary citizens allow the city to keep on living its life: thousands of students going back to school, the basketball team fighting to retain its championship title, and Buzz Aldrin joining 2,000 people at the International Astronautical Congress.

This drive to take responsibility and think out of the box is precisely what is needed to resolve the complexity of current events. We have to crack down on violence, while empowering moderate leaders; fight incitement on both sides and defend the right of every person for freedom of worship; and make sure East and West Jerusalem get their share in infrastructure investments.

It's time for this fresh perspective to rise from the bottom up. We are tired of instant solutions quickly denounced by this side or the other. We are tired of those who take turns making political gains out of our hardship. Jerusalem is a different place, and requires a different point of view: the one we, young people of Jerusalem, discovered 10 years ago, when everyone else said the city was lost.

And from this point of view, there is a lot of good to see. And even more to do. ■

Hanan Rubin is a Jerusalem city councilman and a co-founder of the solution-oriented political movement Wake Up Jerusalem which focuses on quality of life issues for all Jerusalem residents.

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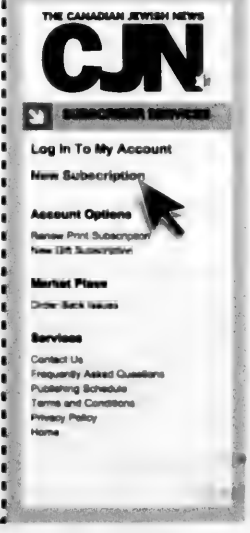
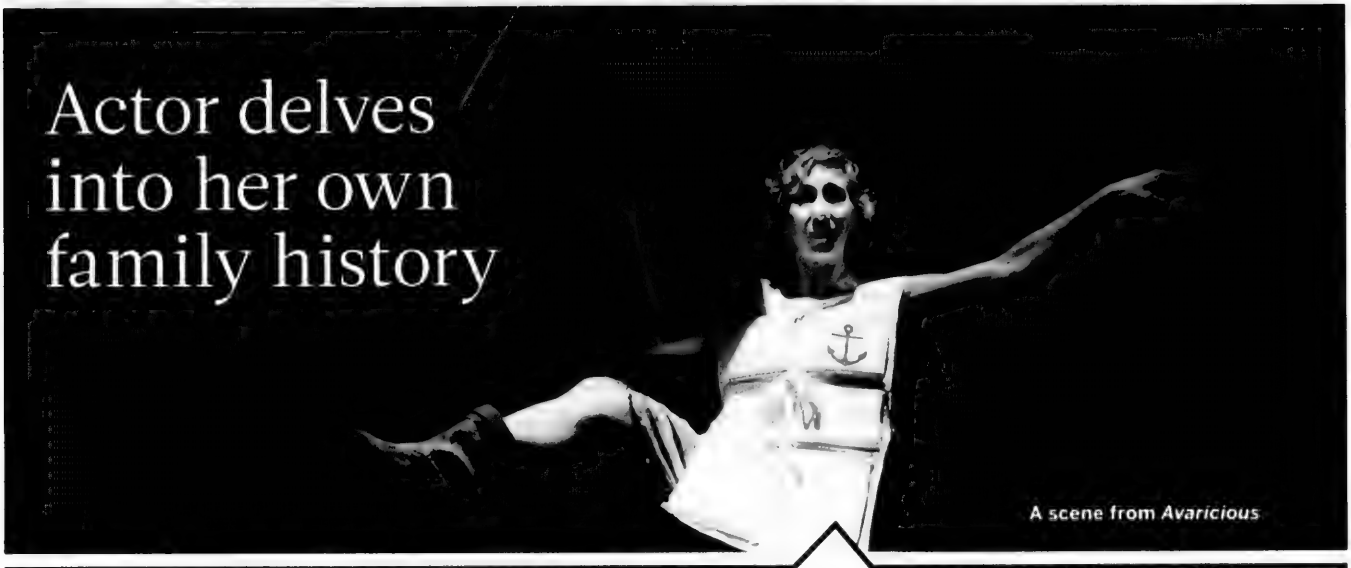


Jewish Life

Actor delves into her own family history



A scene from *Avaricious*

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Actor Michelle Polak has had a busy couple of years. She's currently delving deep into her own history to learn more about her family's past while also working on *Avaricious*, a new play by Toronto's Theatre Gargantua.

"Theatre Gargantua develops work over a two-year-cycle," says Polak. It all started when director Jacquie Thomas asked a group of artists to start mulling on the word gluttony, or avarice.

Eventually, after long hours spent in both the Toronto Reference Library and the rehearsal hall, that wordplay turned into *Avaricious*, a new piece of theatre written by Michael Spence, along with the cast and playwright Kat Sandler. It will get its world premiere on Nov. 4 at Theatre Passe Muraille.

The story centres on an enterprising billionaire and his legion of adult orphans who must survive an impending flood. Polak plays a middle-aged orphan named Rupa.

"The essence of my character is survival," says Polak. "It's all about her needing to survive, and she's caught in a very difficult situation because should she step out of the lines and judge the billionaire, she can be replaced."

Michelle Polak

Polak notes that in a larger sense, *Avaricious* looks at the idea of an economic and environmental tipping point as well as the disparity between rich and poor.

She relates to these themes, both in her personal life and professional life as she's now developing her own play outside of her work with Theatre Gargantua.

"The play is about identity and displacement," she says. "And this summer I started researching my family bloodline because I look physically Sephardi." She's tracked that Sephardi-looking side of her family back to 1732; they were Dutch and Ashkenazi. Her paternal grandfather eventually came to Canada after surviving Auschwitz.

She wants to find out why her surname's Polak considering her Dutch ancestry. "I'm completely obsessed," she says. "My kids are making fun of me."

Her search began in earnest when she reached out to a cousin in Israel. This led her to a man in Amsterdam who shared various Dutch Jewish genealogy sites with her. "In two days, I went from not knowing anything to having a place to research. And 48 hours later, a family tree starts to sprout," she says.

Determined to go further, she's sent her DNA off to testing company 23and-Me and has even persuaded her brother to send his to the National Geographic Society.

Yet, all of this seems to have a deeper meaning; Polak is beginning to reconnect with her roots.

"God and I had a falling out when I was 10 years old in after-school Hebrew school because I asked my teacher, who was probably somebody's bubbie, 'Why did God kill the babies in the Holocaust?' And she couldn't answer me."

For the first time since the 1980s, Polak attended High Holiday services this year. She fasted on Yom Kippur and even commemorated her great-grandmother's yahrzeit, who she learned about through her research.

"It's been a really interesting journey as a lesbian, as a feminist to kind of try and find my place now," she says.

"I think the thing I'm trying to figure out is what does it mean to be Jewish today, in this time, in this age?" she asks. "How do I get my head around the fact that I once thought that if I was a lesbian, I had no place in Judaism?"

She's since brought her many questions to Rabbi Aviva Goldberg from Toronto's Shir Lebeynu congregation as she continues to forge her road of self-discovery. And it's one she'll incorporate into her original work. "There's no way Judaism can't be part of this play now," she says.

Yet, she hopes it'll be relevant for a pluralistic group of people. And she wants the same for *Avaricious*. "I just crave theatre that has impact, so I hope it [*Avaricious*] does," she says. "I hope people leave the theatre different and might even consider their own place in the world." ■

Avaricious opens at the Theatre Passe Murraille Mainspace on Nov. 4 and runs until Nov. 21. For tickets visit www.artsboxoffice.ca

Can technology save Jewish romance?

Chaimie and Leizer

After months of Jewish dating site JDate.com suing its "hip" new competitor JSwipe, the suit was ultimately settled, with the older J buying the younger. Their union has kept dating on the mind. Well, that, and also our complete failure to land ourselves lifemates. That keeps it pretty fresh in the old noodle.

Look, matchmaking is difficult. Yente's profession should be lauded. There are just so many personality components to match. If technology and the Net are now a critical part of mating, well, why not? We already use apps to hail cabs, curate photos and locate the nearest toilet (seriously, there are multiple options in the app store).

But is it good for the Jews?

The dating site ChristianMingle.com was started by a Jew (not to be confused with ChristianYingl.com, a dating site we want absolutely nothing to do with). Noel Biderman, CEO of Ashley Madison, is Jewish as well. Clearly, there is a business to be had here, such that the Chosen People have chosen the "choosing" industry.

So what's love gotta do with it? A lot, Tina, a lot. These apps are only as good as their results – marriages, relationships, good dating stories and horrible (read: fantastic) dating stories. Even casual relationships. Even business casual relationships (i.e. trysts while wearing khakis).

But at the end of the soirée, the question remains: does this stuff work in the *fleish*? In many cases, it falls flat. At least for us. We like our subscription services more on the side of Netflix (and chill) than JDate (and wait). Perhaps if we really want dating to work in the Jewish community for those of different tastes, we need to go more "niche." (Or at least "*niche*" *geferlach*).

For example, how about Ashkenardi.com, a dating website dedicated to linking Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews? It could not only bring the Jewish community together (and somehow bring Ashkenazi men together with Sephardi women wayyy out of their league), but also help cancel out genetic noise to make sure that the next generation is healthy, happy and mostly gefilte-free.

Maybe we need a JHate.com, devoted exclusively to self-hating Jews. Find your bashert and comfort in your perfectly equal hate for yourselves and each other.

But maybe dating is more than just m4w, w4m, m4m, w4w and j4j (Jews for Jesus). We live in an era of voyeuristic obsessions with child photographs on social media. Perhaps it's time for someone to invent Kindr: swipe through examples of children you want your kids to look like. After all, why judge a mate by their looks when you can judge them by their taste in what their own ideal child should look like?

Finally, to save Biderman from the Ashley Madison shandeh, we suggest a new dating service called Asher Mandelbaum, all about Jewish affairs. It's not what you think: we're talking weddings, bar mitzvahs and brisses. This could solve the age-old problem – when you're hungry or in the mood for a drink or company, there are no affairs. When you're invited to an affair, you're not hungry or in the mood for a drink or company. Let's stop the madness and use the Net to set people with appetites up with events with excess inventory. #its2015people, #Iwroteacheckfor180forthisdrek? #makeithappen.

We look forward to innovation in the Jewish social entrepreneurship space to tackle this proverbial Yidlife crisis. In the meantime, the best we can do is hope that Yente finds us a find, matches us a match. And perhaps the merger of JDate and JSwipe provides us one of the great lessons to be applied to all prospective spouses – if you can't successfully sue them, join them.

Ultimately, we realize that successful dating comes from putting yourself out there. As such, we would like put out a CTY (Call-To-Yentes) and a RFP (Request-For-Pictures) to the grander Canadian Jewish community to find our basherts. Email: bashert@yidlifecrisis.com. ■

Chaimie and Leizer are Jamie Elman and Eli Batalion, co-creators of the world's first online Yiddish sitcom YidLife Crisis.

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Flagship CBC Radio show celebrates 25 years

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

CBC's Radio One's flagship literary show *Writers & Company* celebrated its 25th anniversary last month. The longest-running single-host literary show on CBC Radio, it presents nearly hour-long interviews with top-tier authors from around the world.

The show, hosted by Eleanor Wachtel, is thriving, boasting a radio, online and podcast listenership of some 450,000 to 500,000 people for each weekly episode.

Writers & Company got off to a strong start in its first season when Wachtel interviewed Mordecai Richler, Carol Shields, A. S. Byatt, Victoria Glendinning, Derek Walcott, Amos Oz, Nadine Gordimer, J. M. Coetzee, Eduardo Galeano and Ngugi Wa Thiongo, to name just a few.

Over the years, *Writers & Company* has featured more than a dozen Nobel Prize-winning authors. Last month, Wachtel interviewed Orhan Pamuk, Turkey's bestselling writer, who won the literature prize in 2006. Booker Prize-winning author Kazuo Ishiguro has called Wachtel "one of the very finest interviewers of authors I've come across anywhere in the world."

When asked about some of her memorable interviews, Wachtel mentioned the late Oliver Sacks, describing the neurologist and author as "lovable, generous and intriguing." She also said that "it was pretty thrilling" to interview the reclusive Philip Roth in his apartment and to speak to Susan Sontag and Joan Didion, two authors whose writing she's admired and has been reading since university days.

"It sounds just like my wish list being fulfilled, but in a funny way, I wasn't even conscious I had a wish list until I had the opportunity to speak to these people," Wachtel said. She said since writers work in words and words are their medium, they are generally articulate and forthcoming.

"You can engage in a discussion and open up the work, so that the listener who hasn't necessarily heard of the work or the author is able to relate to the ideas and stories," she added. Each author interview requires hours of preparation, she said, comparing it to "having a major paper to write and cramming for a final all at the same time." Wachtel and her producer read the author's newest book, they often read earlier books, and they read about the person.

"I have to have all the details in front of my mind at the time I interview someone," she said.

On the influence of technology on reading, Wachtel said that "one of the biggest changes are the delivery systems, whether people read ebooks or they read hard copies." But what remains constant is the appetite for stories in various forms, she said.

"Yes, there's competition – movies and television – and different ways to watch those things, but there's still an appetite for stories and the intimacy of stories that only a book can provide."

Wachtel, who graduated from McGill University in 1969 with a BA in English literature, has received a slew of honorary degrees, and she was named to the Order of Canada in 2005. *Writers & Company* won a Silver Prize at the 2011 New York Festivals for world's best radio programs.

Reflecting on her career so far, Wachtel said she's been fortunate to have a job that combines her "personal interests and passions with a career out in the world and one that has been so richly rewarded by the world." ■

Eleanor Wachtel

A roundtable with Zadie Smith, Aleksandar Hemon and Caryl Phillips, a Writers & Company special 25th anniversary event, will be aired on Nov. 8 on CBC Radio One at 3 p.m. ET/AT; 3:30 p.m. Nfld; 5 p.m. CT/MT/PT. You can stream or download the podcast, as well as past interviews from the show's archive, at www.cbc.ca/radio/writersandcompany.

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Histories alternate, avoided and actual

NORMAN RAVVIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In 1961, Philip Roth wrote: "The American writer in the middle of the 20th century has his hands full in trying to understand, describe and then make credible much of American reality. It stupefies, it sickens, it infuriates and finally it is even a kind of embarrassment to one's own meagre imagination. The actuality is continually outdoing our talents, and the culture tosses up figures almost daily that are the envy of any novelist."

Canadians generally think of themselves as being at remove from the action in interesting times, but not so of late. With new leaders, this country will move in new economic directions, cultivate different social policy and new ideas about what constitutes a national community. The Conservative Party of Canada judged any number of these issues wrongly in its efforts to gain re-election.

Quebecers have been buffeted by such shifts in political leadership and social policy since the dark months under Pauline Marois, when her separatist party contemplated new ways to engineer human souls: spearheading the Parti Québécois' platform was a prohibition on "ostentatious" expressions of religious faith by employees of public institutions. Even the contemplation of such policies brought about a sure and quick outcome, as Quebecers began singling each other out. As in France, the head-covering became a point of violent disagreement, and policies touted as being in favour of social consensus revealed their explosive, divisive force.

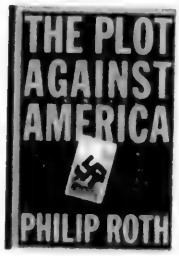
As it turns out, a book in Roth's oeuvre – by no means his best known – serves as an ingenious response to such events. This is his 2004 novel *The Plot Against America*, which offers a canny, even prophetic fictional tableau based on the 1940 U.S. election, which was won by Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Democrats.

The Plot Against America finds Roth writing in a minor genre – that of alternate history. Conventional contributors to this genre are rarely canny or prophetic, but shoot instead for what might be called the extreme, or even the insane. What, they ask, if Adolf Hitler won the war? Or, what if American planes were flown into the towers of Dubai? These are extravagant imaginings, not so different from science fiction scenarios in their effort to work out alternate realities. Roth's book is firmly settled in American public and private history of the 1940s.

It opens at the moment when Roosevelt managed, by securing the majority of urban votes, to win an unprecedented third mandate. But in Roth's fictional revision of that time, F.D.R. is bested, in the face of American isolationism and populism, by the Republican ticket led by the transatlantic flyer Charles Lindbergh.

Lindbergh's fame resulted from his 1927 flight, but also from the "trial of the century" that followed the kidnap and murder of his infant son. Roth roots his imaginings of a nativist Lindbergh leadership in the historical record itself. Lindbergh's attendance at the 1936 Berlin Olympics led him to conclude that Hitler was "undoubtedly a great man," while his wife, the writer Anne Morrow Lindbergh, concurred that American views of Hitler were based on "very strong (naturally) Jewish propaganda in the Jewish-owned papers."

Through the early years of the war, Lindbergh gave prominent speeches in favour of anti-interventionism. His wife's bestselling non-fiction book *A Confession of Faith* promoted similar ideas. It's possible that the kernel that propelled Roth's counter-history is a May 1941 America First Rally at Madison Square Garden, where a crowd of 25,000 cheered Lindbergh as "Our next president."



The Plot Against America
by Philip Roth

Houghton Mifflin

Writing early in this century, Roth could not have foreseen the zealotry of American electioneering of 2015 (certainly, his eye was not on the possibility of a Canadian government whose business might include a "barbaric practices" hotline. In *The Plot Against America*, Canada is the place American Jews consider moving to as life in Newark seems increasingly threatening). But his fiction is prescient, mixing deep historical knowledge with prophetic writing that imagines the rise of proto-fascism in American life.

Roth's genius with character and language dramatizes these ideas rather than drawing him toward polemics. The family at the centre of his fiction is reminiscent of the up-and-coming, well-assimilated New Jerseyans portrayed in his other fiction, wedded as they are to his own background in Newark. On a post-election driving trip to Washington, D.C., the over-proud American-Jewish father finds himself silenced in restaurants and before the Lincoln Memorial as a "loudmouth Jew." Tarring and feathering hovers as the next step in his public diminishment as a cast-off citizen.

A book for thinking about the Canadian abandonment of a select group of its citizens is Michael Kluckner's recent graphic novel *Toshiko*. Kluckner has made his reputation as a careful historian of Vancouver and the B.C. landscape, through his wonderful watercolours of what he has dubbed "vanishing Vancouver." In *Toshiko*, narrative is pushed along by Kluckner's light-handed drawings of the B.C. interior, where Canadian Japanese were "relocated" during World War II after being dispossessed of their homes, businesses and fishing boats, and their birthright in Canadian society.

Toshiko
by Michael Kluckner.

Midtown Press

Roth imagines a similar policy, under a Lindbergh presidency, of sending Jews from the cities to rural outposts. Cynically called "Homestead 42," it relies on major corporations to pinpoint employees who "would benefit enormously by becoming something more than" part of a Jewish family "too frightened ever to leave the ghetto." From Newark, the narrator's family is to be sent to Kentucky.

Kluckner's approach, like Roth's, investigates history by way of a compelling narrative. *Toshiko* focuses on the lives of Canadians who find themselves uprooted and sent to the B.C. interior, and on those whom they meet when they get there. *Toshiko* also finds its way to 1940s Vancouver, a place of squatter huts on the beaches, of young men heading off to war, where a young Japanese woman without a residency permit is apprehended, her partner accused of "harbouring a Japanese."

Toshiko is history well told, while Roth's challenge is to tell history while pushing its borders into fiction. It's a good time to read both books, which remind us of the 1940s and bring the present moment into sharper focus. ■

Norman Ravvin is a writer and critic in Montreal.

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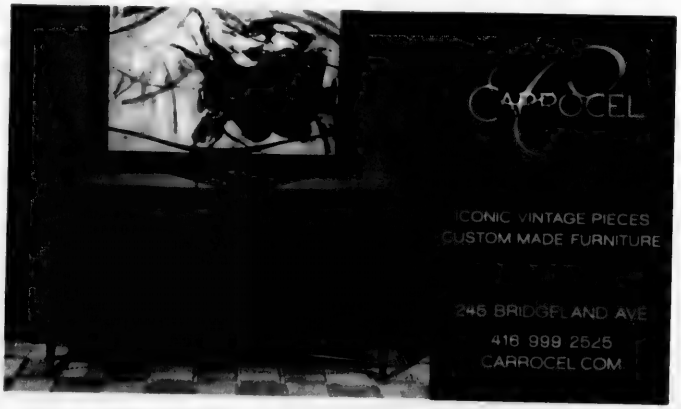

Fartzee Shmartzee promotes healthy eating

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Adam Michael Segal said the idea for his first children's book came to him in his dreams.

"It happened almost as a series of dreams. The idea popped in my head and I think I had health on my mind because I had been working for a health-care government agency as a writer for 10 years and also because I was unhealthy at the time. I really wanted to be healthy, and those ideas kept popping into my head," he said.

Fartzee Shmartzee's Fabulous Food Fest, featuring an animated character that champions the benefits of healthy eating, was written in 2014, when Segal was at home on disability because of a chronic pain issue.

"Over a period of several weeks, I'd wake up with these ideas for the character, for the plot. It came to me in pieces. When I woke up, I'd make sure to write down whatever popped into my head, and then I'd craft and expand the idea," he said.

"I wanted to create a character for kids that would be promoting good health. For me, what I see often, is that a lot of the cartoon characters that are used by food companies do the opposite. They actually promote unhealthy foods. Over time, that builds kids' preferences for these unhealthy foods. I was trying to do the opposite. I was trying to engage them in good nutrition and eating healthy," said Segal, who has two children, aged seven and five.

Soon after Segal wrote the manuscript, he reconnected with a childhood friend, Daniel Abramovici, who happens to be an animator with 20th Century Fox, and he commissioned him to illustrate the book.

After getting a lot of positive feedback from people who read the manuscript, Segal looked into getting the book published, and decided to self-publish, which, he said, gave him more freedom to decide how the final product would look.

"I wanted the story to be funny. That was very important because I know that kids learn a lot better if they're laughing. I also wanted it to have important messages. Some of those messages are about promoting healthy eating, but I also wanted it to have other social messages, like giving back to the community. Somehow, I knew the story would have some element of social responsibility," he said.

Adam Michael Segal with his book

"Another thing that was important to me also was that kids would identify with the story that had an animated character who was kind of teaching his parents a lesson. I liked that concept and I thought it would be effective for kids. That's why in the story, it's the protagonist, a child, who is having an influence on his own family to make healthier food choices."

In addition to promoting the book, Segal is also working on developing a teaching tool kit that would be curriculum-based and would use the book as a teaching resource.

Segal also has ambitions to produce an app related to the book.

"The app idea is based on the principle in the book, which is to reward kids for eating healthy foods. If you think of the way that people keep track of how many steps people take in a day, it would be like that, but it would be kids keeping track of healthy foods they eat."

He said he's already written a second story with the same character based around the theme of fitness, but right now he's focused on promoting the first instalment before he moves forward with another project.

"I think kids are empowered by seeing how a boy can influence his family in such a positive way and how the family, together, discovers that eating smart is fun, cool and important for everyone." ■

To learn more about the book or to purchase it, visit www.adammichaelsegal.com

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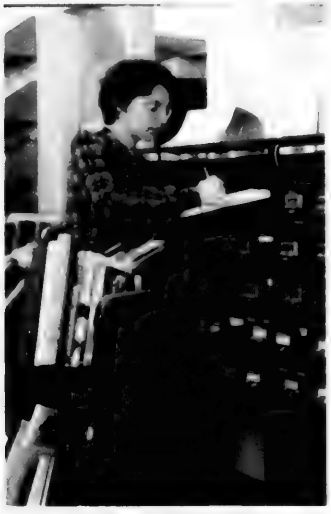

Inside the JPL circa 1965, left, and a librarian at the library on Glen Park Avenue in 1979. OJA, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTOS

Although the Albert and Temmy Latner Jewish Public Library of Toronto closed about eight years ago, the library still exists in ghostly form. Picture rows of bookshelves in a darkened room, permanently locked and as silent as any librarian might wish for, and you are likely not far wrong.

All of the former library's books and resources are apparently still gathering dust in an off-site storage facility, according to Dara Solomon, director of the Ontario Jewish Archives and spokesperson for the now-defunct library, which was operated by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

"They're in storage on Magnetic Drive [near Dufferin Street and Steeles Avenue]," Solomon said. "The movers relocated the library and took all the books out of the boxes and set them up on the shelves."

Tasked with finding a new home for the books, Solomon has been unable to find any takers. "No one is interested in taking on older books," she said. "I haven't been able to find any interest in them."

The library dates back to the late 1930s, when Spadina Avenue bookseller Ben Zion Hyman established a tiny independent library in a storefront along Spadina. By 1941 the library had gone public and moved into the Chambers, a set of rooms in the College and Spadina area.

It subsequently operated out of premises on Markham Street and Glen Park Road before moving in 1983 into its final home at 4600 Bathurst St. Known as the Albert and Temmy Latner Jewish Public Library, it possessed some 30,000 volumes, according to a 1983 article in the *Toronto Star*.

Today the Frank and Anita Ekstein Holocaust Library fills the location where the former library used to reside.

For some reason, despite the Latners' largesse, Toronto's Jewish community never saw fit to develop the Jewish Public Library into a first-rate institution. By comparison, Montreal's venerable, 101-year-old Jewish Public Library is sustained by a $5-million endowment, holds more than 150,000 items, and features a large children's library, archives, multimedia centre, and antiquarian books collection.

In any case, Toronto is not exactly bereft of Jewish bibliographic resources and treasures: the University of Toronto's Robarts Library houses one of the best Judaica collections on the continent.

Since the rise of the Internet many public libraries are moving away from books into electronic resources like ebooks and online databases. Times have changed and the public no longer seems to need or crave printed words as once they did.

Toronto's Jewish Public Library has closed permanently with no prospect of revival, Solomon confirmed. It was closed "due to a lack of resources and a decline in circulation of books being taken out," she said. "That's a universal problem that libraries are having." ■

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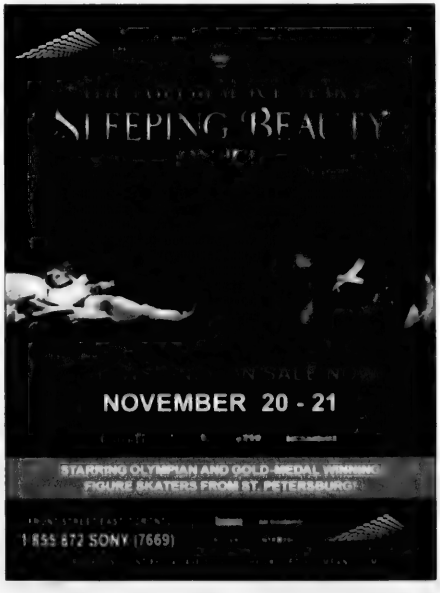
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Film captures devotion of guide dogs and their masters

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

It's amazing the impact a beloved animal can have on a person, even after 71 years.

Max Eisen remembers the last time he saw his dog, Farkas, as if it was yesterday. The image is seared in his memory, and you can still hear the emotion in his voice as he recounts the tale.

Eisen, along with 450 other Jews in the town of Moldava in what is today part of Slovakia, were being marched out of town on the first day of Passover, 1944, en route to Auschwitz. They had been removed from their homes the night before and already their former neighbours had moved into the homes of the departing Jews. They watched in silence as the group walked out of town. As they marched past his family's property, Farkas recognized him and barked madly and wouldn't stop.

"Farkas was the only human being in that town. There was no humanity in that town," Eisen said.

It was a remarkable contrast to a time two years earlier when Eisen returned to his home after he and his father had been deported. Instead of being deported to a death camp, luck was with them and they were brought back from the brink. Something had changed the mind of the Horthy regime in Hungary, and so the Jews who were likely on their way to their deaths, were returned. Farkas greeted him with tail-wagging excitement and licks all over his face.

Viewing a film made during a recent March of the Living [MOL] trip to Nazi death camps, rekindled those memories. Eisen was particularly moved by a scene in which a guide dog for the blind licked the tears from the eyes of one of the Israeli participants. The woman had been on the ground, overcome with emotion by being in a room next to a gas chamber. Her dog, seeing her distress came over to comfort her. Sort of what Farkas did more than 70 years ago, said Eisen.

The 2013 March of the Living included six blind Israelis and their guide dogs.

The film of which Eisen was speaking is titled *Blind Love*, a 28-minute documentary filmed during the 2013 MOL. March of the Living brings young Jews to Poland where they visit sites of Jewish life before the war as well as concentration camps where much of European Jewry were murdered. A contingent of Holocaust survivors accompanies the group, telling their personal stories and adding to the impact of the trip.

The 2013 MOL included six blind Israelis and their guide dogs. One of them, Tel Aviv lawyer Liron Artzi, was the woman who broke down in tears in Majdanek. Her dog, Petel, a mixed Labrador and Golden Retriever, provided comfort when she was in distress.

The inclusion of the blind Israelis came about as the result of a fortuitous set of circumstances. A few years ago, Eli Rubenstein paid a visit to the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind. Among the many hats that Rubenstein wears is one as president of the Canadian support group for the centre, so he wanted to see first hand the work done by that Israeli charity that matches guide dogs with blind people.

It turned out that the visually impaired Israelis he met were quite interested in one of his other community jobs, as national director of March of the Living Canada.

"Many told me they wanted to go on March of the Living," Rubenstein said. "They feel part of the Jewish community and they want to be part of the teaching about the Holocaust."

A film crew went along and they captured images of the visit that touched people on many levels, including the scene in Majdanek. It's a powerful moment and it shows just how far we've come from the days when Nazis trained dogs to murder Jews, Rubenstein said.

"We understood the symbolism," he continued. "The Nazis didn't just murder Jews, they murdered people with disabilities. And the Nazis trained German Shepherds to torture and kill prisoners."

One scene shows survivor David Shentow recounting his arrival in Auschwitz in 1942. As the prisoners disembarked from the train, one man asked an SS guard if he could get a photo from his luggage. The guard ordered his dog on the man. The dog went for his throat, and killed him.

To illustrate the scene, the filmmaker used a vintage photo provided by Canadian Bill Glied. Glied is a survivor of Auschwitz who has been on MOL three times. He has seen the film and believes it packs a powerful message.

"It tells of the juxtaposition of the [guide] dogs against the dogs the Nazis had there."

"The fact they took these six people to Auschwitz is an important and meaningful experience not only for them, but for all the people on the March," he said.

The broadcast premiere of the film is set for Nov. 4 on the CBC Documentary Channel. It was also scheduled to be screened at Congregation Habonim on Nov. 1, 8 p.m., during the 35th annual Holocaust Education Week. The screening co-sponsors are, Congregation Habonim, Toronto Jewish Film Festival, Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, March of the Living Digital Archives Project and Canadian Friends of the Israel Guide Dog Centre for the Blind. ■

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Poet Robyn Sarah wins Governor General award

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Robyn Sarah of Montreal, a published poet since the early 1970s, has won the Governor General's Literary Award for English-language poetry, for her collection *My Shoes Are Killing Me*, it was announced on Oct. 28.

Published by the small house Biblioasis of Windsor, Ont., the collection is a reflection on the passage of time, with references to Jewish identity, that avoids the sentimental and offers unexpected humour, according to critics.

In October, Sarah won the Canadian Jewish Literary Award for the same collection.

The award jury praised *My Shoes* as "a lyrical power" and "a richly inventive, precise, meditative collection... This is a transformative work that continuously surprises the reader."

"My first reaction to finding out that I had won was shock, and I think it still hasn't entirely sunk in," Sarah told *The CJN*.

"Of course I'm happy – it's wonderfully affirming to be given this moment of validation and visibility, especially as a poet. At the same time, it's a little overwhelming to be suddenly in the spotlight, after 30-odd years in the shadows and margins of the literary world. One feels tongue-tied, right when everybody wants a quote!"

Born in New York in 1949 to Canadian parents, Sarah grew up in Montreal and was educated at McGill University and the Conservatoire de musique du Québec.

Her first work was published while she was completing her graduate studies.

She is known for finding inspiration in everyday experience or, in her words, "making much of something small."

Asked what influence her Jewish heritage has had on her writing, Sarah responded: "Well, we have been called the People of the Book. Our community is one in which literacy is valued, and our tradition is one in which words are weighed, considered, and unpacked for all their possible interpretations," she said.

"This is fertile ground for a writer, and especially for a poet, since poetry is the most compressed of literary forms – one in which as much as possible has to be packed into every word chosen. My poems only occasionally touch on overtly Jewish themes.

Robyn Sarah ALLEN MCEACHERN PHOTO

"Being Jewish is part of who I am, so the poems will sometimes reflect that part. I'm also a woman, I'm a musician, I'm a baby boomer entering seniorhood, among other things; those aspects of who I am are reflected in my poetry, too."

Her first full-length poetry collection *The Space Between Sleep and Waking* was published in 1981. Several more collections have been published since, as well as two volumes of short stories.

In 1976, she and Fred Louder founded the small press Villeneuve Publications, which operated until 1987. She taught English literature at Champlain Regional College until 1996.

In recent years, Sarah has been the poetry editor for Cormorant Books, and edited the 2011 collection *Undercurrents: New Voices in Canadian Poetry*.

Also receiving a Governor General's award was the translation into French of Mordecai Richler's novel *Solomon Gursky Was Here*, which won for English into French translation for Lori Saint-Martin and Paul Gagné.

Solomon Gursky is the first of five translations of Richler novels planned by the Montreal publisher Les Editions du Boréal. These are the first new translations of Richler books in Quebec in four decades.

The awards jury said the two translators "render brilliantly the energy, humour, irony and colour of a social fresco that spans five generations, taking us from the Old World to the New."

The awards, which earn winners $25,000 each, will be presented by Governor General David Johnston at Rideau Hall on Dec. 2. ■

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The Socialite

YAD campaign chair Moe Liebman, West Island campaign chair Randy Abecassis, YAD FedNext campaign co-chairs Ali Itzkovitz and Bryan Fuchs (not pictured), Women's philanthropy campaign chair Karen Soussan, Mayim Bialik, general campaign chair Barry Pascal, Sepharade women's campaign chair Danielle Rogozinsky and network campaign chair Neil Uditsky

David Amiel, Federation CJA immediate past president Susan Laxer, Federation CJA president Evan Feldman

Ziv Nevo Kulman, Consul General of Israel for Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces, Karen Soussan and Georges Amar

Trevor Guthrie

"FED" Talks

Over 800 lucky guests attended the sold-out CJA Federation Campaign launch in Montreal to hear talks by Mayim Bialik, star of *The Big Bang Theory*, Malcolm Hoenlein, Middle East expert and executive vice-chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and journalist Zvika Klein, creator of the Internet sensation Ten Hours of Walking in Paris as a Jew. Surprise guest Canadian singer-songwriter Trevor Guthrie performed his recent hits, including *Soundwave*, the score of this year's campaign theme song. ■ Ah, la vie à Montréal – ***The Socialite***

Malcolm Hoenlein

Barry Pascal and Heather Adelson

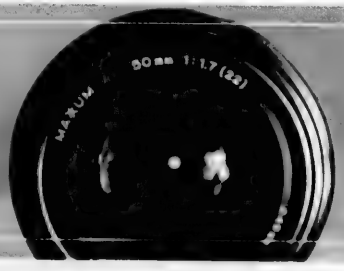
Helene Amar Langburt, Chantal Benitah-Outmezguine, Reina Lallouz and Galit Antebi

Eddy Rogozinsky and Evan Feldman

Joseph Paperman, Mayim Bialik and Heather Paperman

Guests enjoyed themselves at the campaign launch.

The Socialite wants your photos. Email thesocialite@thecjn.ca for submission details.



What's New

NOV. 5 - NOV. 12

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Nov. 5

NASH AND DRASH
Beth Emeth Synagogue presents Nash and Drash with **Rabbi Howard Morrison,** noon. $13. RSVP 416-633-3838.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Adara Goldberg discusses "Holocaust survivors in Canada: exclusion, inclusion, transformation", 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

Hilary Earl discusses "From perpetrators of genocide to ordinary German citizens: the reintegration of Nazi war criminals into German society," 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

OPERA FROM A JEWISH VIEW
Jerry Fink discusses "Opera from a Jewish perspective," today and Nov. 12, 11 a.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $10/$15.

YIDDISH VINKL
Anne Dublin discusses her new book *44 Hours or Strike*, noon, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St.

Friday, Nov. 6

JOB FAIR
Home Depot holds a recruitment event, 2-4 p.m., Bathurst-Finch Hub. Pre-register: employerevent@jvstoronto.org

Saturday, Nov. 7

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION
Krzysztop Czyzewski discusses "Remembering for the future: How to live in a post-Holocaust, post-totalitarian and post-modern world," 7:30 p.m., George Ignatieff Theatre, 15 Devonshire Place. The lecture will also be presented Nov. 8, 10 a.m. at Temple Emanu-El.

Raffi Sarkissian discusses the multimedia project *100 Voices: Survival, Memory and Justice*, about the Armenian Genocide, 7 p.m., Winchevsky Centre.

Temple Har Zion presents *The Lost Rhapsody of Leo Spellman*, 8 p.m.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Nov. 19 is Nov. 9. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Rhonda Lipson, a cancer survivor who created Rhonda's Angels to raise money for the Hospital for Sick Children, has raised over $500,000 for SickKids. A games day at Temple Emanu-El last month raised $100,000. From left are event committee members, Patti Listro, Marilyn Tweyman, Cindy Feigelsohn, Rachel Lipson, Rhonda Lipson, Cheryl Herman, Lorin Klein, Paula Klaiman, and Annie Katsiris. HAILEY TWEYMAN PHOTO

Leslie and **Eva Meisels** are the guest speakers at Pride of Israel Synagogue's Shabbat of Remembrance and Rebirth, 8:45 a.m.

VETERANS' SHABBAT
Capt. Gabriel Granatstein, of the Canadian Armed Forces, speaks at services, 9 a.m. Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Canadian, Russian and Israeli veterans welcome.

CAMP RAMAH SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE
Party night for new and returning campers, grades 1-4, Beth Tzedec Congregation, 6-8 p.m. $5. RSVP www.campramah.com

HADASSAH GALA
John Baird and **Col. Natan Barak** are the guest speakers at Canadian Hadassah-WIZO's gala, 6:30 p.m., Eaton Chelsea Hotel. Tickets, 416-630-8373.

PJ LIBRARY AUTHOR
Children's author **Lesley Simpson** reads at a musical Havdalah, Adath Israel Congregation, 6:45 p.m., $5/$7. Tickets at pjauthorliveuptown.eventbrite.ca; and Nov. 8, 3 p.m. at Bloor Gladstone Public Library.
Free, but must register at pjauthorlivedowntown.eventbrite.ca

Sunday, Nov. 8

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION
Marta Mackowiak and **Matan Shefi** discuss "Family heritage and history: re-approaching Poland," 5 p.m., Lodzer Synagogue. The speakers will offer family research consultations, Nov. 9. To register, email president@jgstoronto.ca

Carson Phillips discusses the challenges gay survivors of the Holocaust faced, 7 p.m., Congregation Darchei Noam.

DO SOMETHING SWEET
Maya and **Zachary Winkler** hold a fundraiser for the Hospital for Sick Children, 3-5 p.m., 81 Ramblewood Lane, Thornhill.

CAMP NORTHLAND OPEN HOUSE
New and returning families are invited to a free screening of the summer video and information session, 2-4 p.m., Toronto Heschel School. 905-881-0018.

WOMEN'S LEARNING
Sara Munk discusses "Leah: a lesson in perseverance," and **Rabbi David Ely Grundland** discusses "The past, present and future of Ma'arat HaMachpelah," 10:30 a.m., Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Synagogue.

Monday, Nov. 9

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Dr. Colleen Carney discusses "The importance of insomnia treatment in depression," 2 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $15. 416-449-3880.

Tuesday, Nov. 10

LUNCHING AND LEARNING
Tom Sandler, son of songwriter **Ruth Lowe**, discusses "I'll never smile again." Bring your lunch at noon, speaker at 12:30. Temple Har Zion.

Marc Jordan discusses "My life in song writing," Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

Cory Keeble discusses "The great synagogues of Europe," noon, Beth Sholom Synagogue. $18.
RSVP 416-783-6103.

ZAREINU FASHION SHOW
Zareinu holds its annual fashion show, Bellvue Manor, 8083 Jane St., Vaughan, 6:30 p.m. www.zareinu.org

ISRAEL STAMP CLUB
"Ancient seals: a precursor to modern stamps," is the topic at the Israel Stamp

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Club, Antibes Community Centre, 7 p.m. 416-226-2050.

KENSINGTON MARKET
Actors **Fiona Reid** and **Ardon Bess** discuss Kensington Market and the TV show, *King of Kensington*, 6 p.m., Lillian H. Smith Library, 239 College St. Sponsored by the Kensington Market Historical Society.

CHUG HATANACH
Sara Horowitz leads the Chug HaTanach studying Isaiah, 8 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

BIBLE STUDY
Carl Ehrlich, York University, discusses the early Israelite period, 7:30 p.m., Congregation Darchei Noam.

Wednesday, Nov. 11

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK
Elaine Page discusses "The continuing story of our Czech Holocaust Torah scroll," 7:30 p.m., Temple Kol Ami.

Anne Dublin discusses "Uncertain haven: Canada and Jewish displaced persons," 7:30 p.m., Ekstein Holocaust Library, Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St.

DARA GENERAL MEETING
Doctors Against Racism and Antisemitism meet at Adath Israel Synagogue, 6:30 p.m. Guest speak, **Dr. Gabby Elbaz.** www.daradocs.org.

Thursday, Nov. 12

IN CONVERSATION
Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich speaks with author **David Bezmozgis,** 7:30 p.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue.

CANADIAN PENSION PLAN
Mark Wiseman, manager of the CPP portfolio, speaks at 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Synagogue. $15/$20. Register at www.adathisrael.com

BOOK CLUB
Cathy Tile reviews *An Officer and a Spy*, 1 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $10.

RABBI LURIA
Aaron Nussbaum discusses "Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Ari Hakodesh," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

VE'AHAVTA'S GALA
Ve'ahavta honours community leaders at a dinner with performances by Shad, Jaffa Road and Digging Roots, 6 p.m., Koerner Concert Hall. For tickets, www.veahavta.org or 416-964-7698.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- **Looking ahead:** A 6-session group for newly separated or divorced individuals. Starts Nov. 5, 7 p.m.
- **Living with teens:** A 6-session group for parents of teenagers. Starts Nov. 5, Lipa Green Centre 7:30 p.m. or Nov. 16, Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St., 7:30 p.m.
- **Life skills for today's woman:** A 6-session group on time and stress management, self-esteem, etc. Starts Nov. 5, 7 p.m. at Lipa Green Centre or Nov. 10, 1 p.m. at Lebovic JCC.
- **Adult children losing a parent:** A 6-session group for adults who have recently lost a parent. Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC.
- **Effective Parenting:** A 4-session group for parents of children aged 2-10. Starts Nov. 11, 7 p.m. or Nov. 26, 1 p.m.
- **The challenge of anger for women:** A 6-session group for women. Starts Nov. 11, 7:30 p.m.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Nov. 19, 26, **Jonno Lightstone** discusses "Big band jazz," with live music, 1-3 p.m.; Nov. 5, book club discusses *The Glass Room*, by **Simon Mawer,** 11 a.m.; Nov. 19, social games club, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. RSVP 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or lisar@mnjcc.org.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9; Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.; exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Nov. 8, Skullcaps Band performs classic Jewish songs, 1:30 p.m.; Nov. 9, Film *Return of the Violin*, 1:30 p.m. for Holocaust Education Week; Nov. 10, **Gerald Ziedenberg** discusses "A history of modern Russia – part 4," 10 a.m.; Nov. 12, lecture on "Hearing solutions," 1:30 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; live entertainment Nov. 18, 2 p.m.; barber Nov. 5, 10 a.m; creative circle Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m.
- **Association of Jewish Seniors:** Home fire safety with **Denise Hynes**, Nov. 19, 9:30 a.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. RSVP 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **National Council of Jewish Women-Aviva Chapter** is looking for senior women who would like to join, 416-633-5100.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- Screening of *24 Days*, Nov. 22, 7 p.m.
- "A Taste of Jazz," presented by the Royal Conservatory of Music, Nov. 3-17, 1 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Van Gogh and Gauguin, Friendship, rivalry and tragedy," Nov. 17-Dec.1, 1 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "A look at Jewish comedy in movies," Nov. 4-25, 1 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Fall supper club for young adults with developmental disabilities, Wednesdays till Nov. 18, 4-8:30 p.m. Ext. 330.
- **Tamar Levy** discusses parenting, Nov. 5, 8 p.m. (Hebrew). Ext. 321.
- 9-week photography project for youth 18-30 who are disabled, with artist **Maayan Ziv,** Sundays, Nov. 8-Jan.24.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Wunderkinder*, with guest speaker **Bernice Eisenstein,** Nov. 8, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Tickets on sale one hour before show time.
- *State of Women* is at the Al Green Theatre, Nov. 11-16, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities. Sundays to Dec. 6, 1 p.m.
- Shabbat family party, spaces still available, Fridays, 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Ext. 388.
- Mindfulness-based stress reduction workshop Nov. 15. Ext. 574.
- Wheel dance: learn Latin dance in a mixed abilities class. Sundays to Dec. 6, 6 p.m. Ext. 330.
- Postnatal spin class, Mondays 10:30 a.m. Ext. 567.
- Open community choir, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. with **Gillian Stecyk**.
- Everyday Friends: social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Ext. 330.
- **Iain Scott** discusses "Four of the greatest scenes from opera," Nov. 9, 16, 23, 1:30 p.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. For programs, ext. 3025.

- "Is your child a picky eater?" will be discussed Nov. 11, 7 p.m.
- Create a silk cover, Nov. 5-26, 7 p.m.
- Intermediate mah-jong starts Nov. 24, 10:30 a.m.
- Screening of *Above and Beyond*, Nov. 8, 7 p.m. ■

MARRIED WITH KIDS

Behind the wheel

Lauren Kramer

There was a sick feeling in my stomach the day I told my dad he could no longer drive my kids around.

I knew it was time, knew I had to do it. Still, I felt a traitor uttering those words, my heart in my throat as his face fell with visible disappointment at the knowledge I no longer trusted him behind the wheel.

"You think I'm unfit to drive?" he asked incredulously. He'd been re-tested for his licence just months earlier, an exam he'd deemed unnecessary and grumbled about at length. In the end, he'd passed, but a nagging uncertainty persisted inside me. A little voice in my head reminded me about the red light he hadn't seen that one time, or the occasion he'd almost reversed into my car. So, how could I put my greatest treasures into his vehicle?

"It's not that I think you're unfit," I hedged, trying to inch my way delicately out of this incredibly painful conversation. "It's just that I'm not willing to take any chances."

Of course, it wasn't worth taking the chance. It hadn't been for at least six months. In the beginning, I'd tried not to say so out loud. When he'd offer to take the children for ice cream, I'd suggest we walk instead of drive. For other get-togethers we'd meet at a destination.

But eventually, honesty is unavoidable, and we had reached that point. I had to stand up as a mother and tell this man I love so dearly, this fiercely strong man who had fathered me with gentle determination all my life, that I questioned his driving skills. That I wasn't certain how much longer he should be behind the wheel. And that even if I was wrong, it wouldn't be worth it to experiment.

It's ironic, really. A year after I got my driver's licence at 18, my father declared I was a danger on the road, confiscated my keys and enrolled me in driving lessons. I remember feeling mortified and humiliated. "I can drive!" I raged. "I passed the test! Why are you making me take lessons?"

> *A little voice in my head reminded me about the red light he hadn't seen.*

It's hard to talk reason into a feisty 19-year-old who knows everything. But my parents managed to communicate their fear that I was driving recklessly, driving too fast, that I was an accident waiting to happen. "Do this for us," they pleaded. "We're paying. Just go for more lessons."

Steaming with indignation, I took the lessons. (It was the only way I was getting my car keys back, so I was highly motivated.) I learned a little about defensive driving, and while I'll never know if those classes made a difference, to this day, I've never had an accident.

Life moved relentlessly forward. My father has been behind the wheel for 56 years and his track record is, for the most part, impeccable. Sure, there are a few speeding fines and parking infractions. But he's never bent a fender, caused a collision or written off a vehicle.

Still, I'm the one who's fearful now. Fearful that he's not as alert as he once was, that his reflexes aren't as fast, that his anger might overwhelm him on the road. I can't wait for the possibility of an accident to find out if I'm right.

So here we are, a father and a daughter. A man who's convinced of his competence behind the wheel. A daughter who worries that he may lack insight into his abilities and that his skill in the driver's seat may have diminished. We love each other fiercely. And yet. There are my children, my innocents, who know nothing about the road and its hazards or about aging and its effects. They want a ride to the fish shop with Grandpa and look at me, mystified, when I insist they cannot just climb into the back seat.

I'll do the driving now, and gladly. I never want to say, "I told you so." ■

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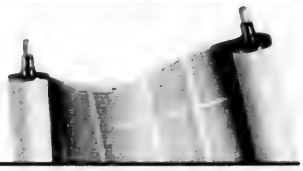
Parshah

Chayei Sarah | Genesis 23:1-25:18



Maharat Abby Brown Scheier surveys how the commentators describe Isaac's return to his community
Rabbi Denise Handlarski locates the roots of Jewish feminism in the Torah's description of Rebecca
Rabbi Yirmi Cohen explains the uniqueness of the Cave of Patriarchs in the history of Judaism

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier

Many people recall vividly the first meeting with their eventual spouse. But how about what happened immediately prior to that first meeting?

Interestingly, the Torah records what happened immediately prior to Isaac's first meeting with his future wife, Rebecca: "And Isaac came from the way of Be'er Lachai Roi, for he dwelt in the land of the South" (Genesis 24:62).

The commentators point to the significance of this verse, which describes not only Isaac's actions prior to his marriage, but also represents the first action he takes following the Akedah – the binding by his father on Moriah. There is significance to this emergence, and many interpreters offer fascinating insights into Isaac's inner life.

They point to the unique location where Isaac had settled: Be'er Lachai Roi. This was the desert well where an angel spoke to Hagar and said that God has heard her cries. She is promised a son, Ishmael, whose seed will be greatly multiplied (Genesis 16:10-14).

The midrash (Tanchuma) states that Isaac travelled to Be'er Lachai Roi in search of Hagar – he wanted to bring her back to Abraham. Now that Isaac is about to be married and start his own family, he didn't want his father to be alone.

According to Nahmanides, Isaac was visiting a place where prayers were answered. Perhaps Isaac was searching for a place to pray for his future marriage.

Finally, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch wrote that Isaac had been in the desert all along. He desired a life of seclusion.

Coming from Be'er Lachai Roi seems to represent Isaac's return to life and community. Perhaps he is brought back by the need to take care of his father. Perhaps he realizes that it is time to leave the place of seclusion and reconnect with people. Once he is committed to leave the desert and embrace family and community, he – together with his wife Rebecca – continues the legacy of Abraham and Sarah. ■

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier is a Judaic Studies teacher in Montreal, where she lives with her husband and four daughters.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

Although named for "Sarah's life," this parshah really begins with Sarah's death and burial. It then goes on to detail the betrothal of Rebecca to Isaac.

Rebecca is chosen because she is generous – she gives of her water and offers her home for hospitality. In order to marry Isaac, she is asked whether she will leave her own home and travel to Isaac's home. She declares strongly, "I will go."

Rarely in the Torah do we see women have the opportunity to assert their own will in this way. Rebecca wishes to use her strong character, her generosity and hospitality to better not just her own family but a whole people. The person she first benefits, of course, is Isaac. After they marry, the text says that Isaac is comforted from the loss of Sarah, his mother. The parshah begins with Sarah's death and ends with this note of Isaac finding comfort in another woman, the future mother to the generations of their descendants.

The assertion of Rebecca's will and the text's continual return to the importance of these matriarchs – for the well-being of the patriarchs (Abraham and Isaac) and in their own right – highlights the familial nature of the origin stories of our people.

Historically in Jewish text and culture, women, unfortunately, have played a secondary role. However, as the ones who tended to manage the family and the household, women have played a tremendous role in the fabric of Jewish life.

Even our texts, which tend to be filtered through and centred on a male point of view, acknowledge this extremely significant role. Although women are often seen as secondary, Rebecca has agency, and Isaac needs her.

These are the moments in our core texts that have given Jewish feminists the tools to imagine the place for women in Judaism. ■

Rabbi Denise Handlarski is spiritual leader of Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen

This week's Torah portion, Chayei Sarah, tells us that, when Sarah passed on, Abraham went to purchase a field from Ephron the Hittite for the cave of the patriarchs and matriarchs.

Ephron offered it as a gift, but Abraham insisted on paying the full price, 400 silver shkalim. Why the full price? Abraham wanted to remove any connection between this cave and Ephron, so that it would remain his and the forefathers.

Now unfortunately, with terror in Israel, UNESCO has asked to have the cave turned over to Arabs. This Torah reading tells us the uniqueness of the cave: it is the first site in Israel to be purchased for the Jewish People. Since it was bought to bury Sarah, the mother of Isaac, it is clear that the cave has no connection to Ishmael. The cave gives us strength to believe *all* of Israel will remain in the hands of the Jews forever.

We must strengthen Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. But we should not be begging for "negotiations!" Negotiations have in the past led to terrible concessions and more bloodshed, God forbid! We must not negotiate any place in Israel! Talk, yes, but not negotiate our tiny country!

We have all seen the horrific pictures of our brothers and sisters who are being murdered. What can we do for them? The Torah says that when Jewish males put on tfillin, this scares away the enemy. Let's recite Psalms of King David, Tehilim, every day. I treasure the 10 minutes every day, when I drive my son to cheder and we say Psalms for Israel.

It is also an auspicious time for women to pray when they light Shabbat candles.

So, give charity. Study more Torah. Talk to someone you haven't seen for a while.

Peace at home brings blessings to us. May we merit Mashiach with the Third Temple on the Temple Mount, in Jerusalem. Amen! ■

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen is spiritual leader at Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation in Toronto. yirmicohen@sympatico.ca

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Tea is an adventure in a cup

CAROLYN BLACKMAN
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Tea sommelier Carol Mark.

The Canadian Friends of Israel Elwyn is hosting an Afternoon Tea with a Modern Twist, Nov. 15, at the Holland Bloorview Conference Centre, 2-4 p.m., featuring certified tea sommelier Carol Mark.

At the event, "we will serve food paired with tea – things you would have had growing up in a kosher household," Mark said in an interview.

Funds raised will go to Israel Elwyn's preschool programs, which are located in various parts of the country.

"Currently, we are raising funds for a new preschool centre in the Haifa region," said Moshe Greengarten, chairman of the board of Canadian Friends of Israel Elwyn.

Founded in 1984, Israel Elwyn serves more than 3,000 children and adults with disabilities throughout Israel. The ultimate goal of all of Israel Elwyn's programs is to provide individuals with the tools they need to lead more independent lives within the community.

At the tea, Mark will talk about various topics including the health benefits of tea, how it is ethically grown and processed, and kosher tea.

Mark, the daughter of Chinese immigrants, said that when she was growing up, tea was always served at family gatherings and at the New Year, and was also used as medicine.

After recovering from breast cancer, she said, she rediscovered tea as a tool for taking time to heal, as well as part of a healthy lifestyle.

"Tea is a young scientific area," Mark said. "It has been found through a study that women under 50 years of age who are drinking three cups of green tea a day lower their chances of breast cancer by 37 per cent.

"Tea is the new buzzword for health, as there has been research in this area, especially with green tea. For the first time in British history, green tea is outselling black tea, and this is also happening across the world."

Originally a nurse and then an art gallery owner, Mark founded The Love of Tea, a purveyor of specialty pure blended teas that supports art and social change through its donation programs from tea sales.

"My start in the tea business was quite by accident. As part of my own recovery, I researched the health benefits of tea and started giving away tea to other people who were recovering. There are many components to my tea business, including at www.theloveofteamag.com, a newly launched e-magazine, which all together certainly takes up most of my life.

"I am also launching a bottled, healthy, to-go tea with no additives or sugar. Sugar has been identified as a main culprit underlying many diseases including cancer, and hidden sugar amounts to 80 pounds per year per person. When travelling I could not find a ready to-go drink I wanted.

"It also has a charity component and a percentage of each bottle will be donated to The Power of Health conference, which I established as an event to share best practices in health, food, medicine, alternative treatments slated for October 2016. We can only be healthier when we have the knowledge to make informed decisions."

In the 19th century in North America, Mark said, "women could only legally gather together to work on women's rights issues at teatime. In fact, the traditional tea events held by Jewish women's social groups had the same aims. They would fundraise for special causes. I feel like I'm continuing the tradition of women's political involvement and social change.

"Tea brings people together and provides a quiet, calming moment in the day to take time for yourself. That is why Silicon Valley has embraced tea to create moments of personal calm for their employees."

Tea, Mark said, is "an adventure in a cup. There are distinct taste profiles reflecting the growing regions around the world. I cook with tea, from appetizers to main dishes, desserts and even tea cocktails.

"Tea comes from one plant, Camellia Sinensis, and the way it is processed determines the end product. Black tea is wilted and fully oxidized, white tea is wilted and unoxidized, oolong tea is wilted, bruised and partly oxidized, yellow tea is wilted and unoxidized, green tea is wilted and unoxidized and puer tea is fermented.

But, Mark said, "my main focus is health, and that means organic and pesticide free. I was shocked a few years ago to learn that many individuals like myself were using tea as a health benefit, but there was little known information on the use of pesticides. So to have a healthy cup of tea ensure it is organic and pesticide free as possible." ■

With files from Susan Minuk.

Admission to the Israel Elwyn Afternoon Tea with a Modern Twist is $36 and a tax receipt will be issued.

Hilary Earl: Why do normal people do sadistic things?

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Holocaust Education Week 2015's scholar-in-residence, Hilary Earl, is a historian whose research focuses on perpetrator testimony and war crimes trials in the aftermath of the Holocaust. She is associate professor of European history at Nipissing University and the author of *The Nuremberg SS-Einsatzgruppen Trial, 1945–1958: Atrocity, Law, and History*, which won the 2010 Hans Rosenberg Prize for best book on German history from the American Historical Association. *The CJN* spoke to Earl about her research.

Hilary Earl

What are some things you'll be speaking about during HEW?

I'll be giving two public talks. One is at Beth Tzedec Congregation (Nov. 5) and is about a Nazi perpetrator named Martin Sandberger, who lived until 2010. He was prosecuted, but then reintegrated back into German society, raising a family and having quite a good career.

During the war, Sandberger was in charge of a commando responsible for killing all the Jews of Estonia. He was very well educated and had a PhD in law. After the war, he was prosecuted in Nuremberg. He was sentenced to death, but because of various political reasons, like the Cold War, the Americans reviewed his sentence and commuted it from death to a prison sentence. He was only in jail for 10 years. Then there was enormous pressure on the Americans to let German war criminals go, and they released him from prison in 1958. He had a lot of supporters and help from various important Germans, and got a good job for a major company, becoming their lawyer. He made a handsome living.

Why are you so interested in Nazi perpetrators?

I started out my scholarly career looking at victims and I didn't sleep, it was so horrible, and it broke my heart continuously. I was very interested in the question of why people who aren't pathological or otherwise sadistic or deranged are willing to participate in violence against other people – the question of why people hurt each other and so I came upon this subject of research.

The trial that I came to look closely at is the Nuremberg SS-Einsatzgruppen trial, which took place from 1945 to 1958. It was the ninth of the 13 Nuremberg trials and was a genocide trial of 24 individuals who could have been leaders or professors or business icons but happened to be in the Third Reich. They were major perpetrators who carried out major crimes against the Jews of Europe.

I think it's easier to understand why someone hurts someone else when they're ill or pathological, but harder to understand why regular people are involved in killing.

Have you found answers about why people who weren't deranged were involved in this sort of genocide?

With the individuals I've been looking at, they were highly ambitious and the state offered them careers to advance themselves if they were willing to do what it wanted. Almost all of these men were committed nationalists, and the professorate in the 1920s and '30s in Germany was full of diehard German nationalists who influenced their students. They weren't necessarily fascist, but were sympathetic to the Nazis. Sandberger, for example, was heavily influenced by his professors.

There are a number of reasons why men like him got involved in Nazi activity, but anti-Semitism was probably the least motivating factor. Some were diehard anti-Semites, but some really weren't at all. And that, too, is scary – that people can participate in killing when they don't even hate the people they're killing. I call these guys hybrid killers. They weren't the shooters, but the order-givers. But they also weren't sitting at desks like Adolf Eichmann. They were in the field overseeing mass atrocities. Collectively, these 24 supervisors killed between one million to 1.5 million people.

What can we learn about their reintegration into German society?

One takeaway is that Germany is the country that has dealt most extensively with the crimes of its past, but in order to do so, they have had to let people like Sandberger be welcomed back into German society. They prosecuted who they could prosecute, but then they had to run their country somehow.

Millions of Nazis were still alive after the war. Genocide is a corporate act, and it takes a myriad of people to carry it out. Sadly, many of the perpetrators ended up being major government officials or major players in business after the war. There was a collective amnesia in Germany in some ways. Inevitably, some people were never held to account. But Germany is also unique in that it recognizes what it's done and did its best to bring to trial who they could.

One hears about contemporary Germans having a collective sense of guilt for the Shoah. Is this recent and not prevalent in the years after the war?

It depends who you talk to and on the time frame. Nothing is static. Germany has ensured that education plays a major role in the transformation of its society. Germans learn all about the country's past in school. It's no coincidence Germany is one of the countries that produces the most historians. So, sure, there's a collective guilt and a sense of feeling badly, but they've also confronted it and continue to confront it, like with the recent prosecution of former Auschwitz death camp officer Oskar Groening.

If there was this sense of guilt, why were so many perpetrators allowed to work in high positions after the war?

Because there were millions of perpetrators. It requires half a country to commit genocide, and we don't have a justice system that's able to contend with that. Even if we did, you can't put your entire country in jail. It's one of the greatest problems in post-conflict societies – there are so many people involved in the violence that you can't penalize all of them. Germany's way to address this has been multifaceted: it has been to prosecute the highest-ranking people it could find, the decision-makers, and to use the educational system to transform society. It's also been to keep the issue alive by creating memorials and museums and making transfer payments to Israel.

The guys I study from the Nuremberg SS-Einsatzgruppen trial were leaders of killing units, and most got out of prison by 1958. The men they gave the orders to were largely prosecuted in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and many of these order-receivers got heavier sentences than the order-givers.

Why is that?

Because the leaders were prosecuted by the Americans, and the underlings were prosecuted by the Germans. Politics got involved. Between 1945 and 1949, the Americans prosecuted the biggest surviving war criminals they could find. But then Germany first got independence in 1949 (and completely in 1955), and part of the process of getting independence was its ability to prosecute the criminals themselves. So they began initiating trials starting in 1949, and they tended to have more severe penalties, aside from the death penalty against the original 23 tried in Nuremberg. The Americans wanted Germany as an ally against the Soviets, and part of that was letting the German war criminals out of prison. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
President

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The Nazi pied piper's lethal seduction

Backstory

EROL ARAF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The 80th anniversary of the release of the German film *The Triumph of the Will* calls for revisiting its significance. Leni Riefenstahl's documentary is constantly reconfigured and recycled for scenes requiring mass ornamentation in modern cinema, and its thematic ethos resonates in the folklore of 21st-century social media. To this day, the film's camouflaged message of pied pipers leading the multitudes to the promised land of imagined communities has been adapted by the disseminators of genocidal propaganda.

As German Prof. Eric Rentschler observed in his book on Nazi cinema, *The Ministry of Illusion*, the conjurers of Berlin made full use of film's ability to mobilize emotions and immobilize minds. "Audiovisual machinery played a crucial role in National Socialist design for living, in radical attempts to control human activity and dominate the physical world," Rentschler wrote.

Indeed, the Third Reich was, in the words of filmmaker Hans Jurgen Syberberg, "a sustained cinematic event," where its principal protagonists experienced their participation in shaping and leading Germany to total destruction as performing "stars" in the "greatest movie" ever made. They were simply "movie mad."

The Nuremberg Rally's choreography of violence and its "brute symmetry," in the words of American writer and filmmaker Susan Sontag, amounted to Nazi self-perception being projected onto the silver screen. The rally was a meticulously staged show, adorned with human and material props, exclusively designed for Riefenstahl's lenses.

In the film, Adolf Hitler was a national matinee idol who also happened to be the Reich's chancellor. The Fuhrer became the artist, and the artist became the Fuhrer. Indeed, according to a conversation in August 1939 before the outbreak of World War II, published in *The British War Blue Book*, Hitler told British ambassador Neville Henderson: "I am an artist and not a politician. Once the Polish question is settled, I want to end my life as an artist."

By estheticizing the political sphere, the Nazis anesthetized the masses with "songs, props, circuses and dances." These were the tools of the lethal seduction that enabled the National Socialists to create an omnipotent and omnipresent media dictatorship. The "celebrities" of the New Germany became also the jailers of the German mind.

The notion of "captive audience" assumed a new and sinister meaning in the Nazi world of manufactured dreams. But what we failed to see, as American historian George Mosse said, was "that the fascist esthetic itself reflected the needs and hopes of contemporary society, that what we brushed aside as the so-called superstructure was in reality the means through which most people grasped the fascist message, transforming politics into a civic religion."

And this is precisely how the celluloid "superstructure" engendered the invisible pied piper leading Germany and Europe with songs and dances to a calamitous finale.

The wizardry of fascism fascinated then, and continues to fascinate now. If the esthetic constructs of Leni Riefenstahl are enjoying a posthumous revival in modern cinema – as digital special effects greatly enhance the visual power of epic mass ornamentation – it is not because a venomous ideology has been resuscitated. It is because the form enjoys enduring appeal.

The danger here is that digital special effects combined with poisonous content can become once more a lethal tool in deadly hands. Rentschler was the first to point out that American filmmaker George Lucas restaged ceremonies from *The Triumph of the Will* in the final scene of *Star Wars, Episode 1*. In *Batman Returns*, the monumental constructs were pure Riefenstahl, Speer and Breker. More recently, *The Hunger Games* episodes, *Ridley Scott's Exodus: Gods and Kings*, and Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* and Hobbit trilogies have encapsulated the quintessence of *The Triumph's* form.

But the real contemporary problem with the appeal of Leni Riefenstahl's vision does not reside in digitally reconfigured battle scenes. It finds its most lethal expression in cyberspace and its plethora of ubiquitous platforms that have become the dominant media for the dissemination of hatred. The Net defines who we are, how we perceive ourselves, how we project our desires, how we love, how we hate and how we preach violence. It is pervasive and all consuming in terms of its ability to manipulate emotions, mobilize fears, generate instant mass action communities and even light the fuse of orgies of ethnic mass murder on a global scale. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Morris Szelkowicz	Oct 17/15	17 Granite Street	Al Dickstein	Oct 22/15	4005 Bayview Avenue
Carole Hollander	Oct 18/15	170 Simonston Blvd.	Saundra Sherman	Oct 23/15	155 Marlee Avenue
Shirley Midanik	Oct 18/15	4268 Bathurst Street	Genia Rakowski	Oct 24/15	2500 Bathurst St.
Olga Frankfort	Oct 17/15	1 Waterhouse Way	Dr. Karen Schonbach	Oct 24/15	377 Balliol Street
Geraldine Waldman	Oct 20/15	152 Pinewood Avenue			
Robin Tator	Oct 19/15	155 Faywood Blvd.			
Jerome David Diamond	Oct 19/15	3560 Bathurst Street			
Luba Koper	Oct 23/15	541 Finch Avenue West	Yaffa Fortes	Oct 20/15	1925 Steeles Ave. East

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Inside

Will Stéphane Dion be a strong supporter of Israel?

New foreign minister's recent remarks and mixed record on Mideast raise questions.
PAGES 12, 13

Shuls move to help Syrian refugees

Congregations raise thousands to help families, but security remains a concern.
PAGE 19

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Halifax	4:30 p.m.	5:35 p.m.
Montreal	4:08 p.m.	5:13 p.m.
Ottawa	4:17 p.m.	5:22 p.m.
Toronto	4:36 p.m.	5:39 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:29 p.m.	5:39 p.m.
Calgary	4:33 p.m.	5:44 p.m.
Vancouver	4:15 p.m.	5:24 p.m.

WELCOME TO OTTAWA

The CJN talks to Jim Carr, Michael Levitt, Karina Gould, David Graham, Julie Dabrusin and Anthony Housefather – the six MPs set to represent the Jewish community on Parliament Hill. **PAGE 8**

The Soviets and the Shoah

A narrative of revenge. **PAGE 23**
PLUS, Wrapping up Holocaust Education Week **PAGES 21, 22, 24**

Whither Orthodox female rabbis?

Recent ruling won't change our role, maharot say. **PAGE 15**
PLUS, RABBI 2 RABBI PAGE 4

After her divorce, she heard music

Dayna Shereck started writing songs at age 35. Turns out she's got a knack for it. **PAGE 45**

Population transfers nixed, and throwing water on messianic fervour

Israel expelling cats and crocs?

Israeli Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel cancelled a proposal to deport Israel's feral cats last week. Environmentalists had objected to Ariel's plan, which he said was necessary because spaying and neutering cats violates biblical law. For a few days after, it seemed Israel's animals were safe. But then the head of the Yafit settlement suggested transferring crocodiles from the West Bank to a foreign country after a crocodile was found on its grounds Nov. 4. The little croc likely escaped from a farm on a nearby moshav, though owner Gadi Bitan said it's not his. A number of reptiles have escaped from the farm, including several dozen in 2011. A state official said Bitan has previously blocked solutions to the problem.

Just a leaky pipe

Water dripping from walls doesn't usually induce rapture, but it did Nov. 3 for some visitors to the Kotel, who thought water flowing from the ancient stones signalled the coming of the Messiah. According to biblical prophecy, the Messiah's arrival will come with a great awakening of nature in the Holy Land, starting with water gushing from "the house of the Lord" in Jerusalem to fill all the rivers of Israel. But maintenance workers said the leak, detected in the area known as Wilson's Arch, was due to a burst pipe on the Temple Mount next to the Kotel. Water had seeped into the stones and made its way to the prayer section.

They're both welcome in the Holy Land.

Powerful Jews make *Forbes* list

Several Jews, including Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, made it onto *Forbes* magazine's 2015 World's Most Powerful People list, published Nov. 4. Of the 73 people on the list, U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen was the highest-ranked Jew at No. 7, while Zuckerberg was No. 10. Other Jews in the top 50 were Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, 21; Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein, 26; Google co-founder Sergey Brin, 30; and former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, 44. Russian President Vladimir Putin was No. 1, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel was second. U.S. President Barack Obama was No. 3. ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

53%

The percentage of Israeli Jews in a new poll who said terrorists who perpetrate attacks on Jews should be killed on the spot.

57%

The percentage of Jews in a new Pew survey on religion who said they eat pork. Looking at other religious dietary restrictions, 90 per cent of Muslims said they don't eat pork, and 67 per cent of Hindus said they avoid beef.

Quotable

There are a lot of people who'd rather see me shut up.

— Muslim feminist Raheel Raza on the fatwa against her by a Saudi cleric. More on p. 62.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz shines a light on menorahs.

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Letters to the Editor

Election reflections

Much has been written on the pages of *The CJN* about former prime minister Stephen Harper's incredible support for Israel and what that means to the Jews. Since the election, there have been several analyses of the results.

The strong Zionist in me who is outraged by the world's unfairness to Israel and who has a son and his family living in Jerusalem deeply mourns the passing from office of the greatest foreign friend Israel has ever had as head of a government.

The patriotic Canadian, and lover of democracy in me, voted enthusiastically to have him removed from that job and rejoices in our success. The man was not good for this country.

Now what we supporters of Israel need to do in the next while is hold the Liberal government to its promise to be a good friend to the Jewish state. That would start by opposing the many preposterous resolutions that are routinely put to the United Nations General Assembly by various Jew-hating dictatorships and spineless European governments, as that party failed too often to do in the past. They can still support the rare reasonable one that may come up.

Ken Frankel
Montreal

Finding partners for peace

The Oct. 22 column, "In Israel, terror and frustration abound," implies that the Israeli government is somehow absolved from responsibility with the rise of the current terror wave in Israel.

Editor Yoni Goldstein asks, "But what can Israel do? There is no one to talk to about peace on the Palestinian side, and no clear method to curtail the violence." There are many in Israel and in the Diaspora who would disagree with such an assessment. A senior IDF official, Alan Nitzan, testified that right-wing extremist settlers in the West Bank are fuelling Palestinian violence and terror. Nitzan related that both the activities of IDF soldiers and West Bank settlers are viewed by Palestinians as perpetuating the occupation.

Some would argue that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has failed to provide security to Israeli citizens and is simply managing the conflict with a reactive policy. If Netanyahu recently declared that territorial concessions towards establishing a Palestinian state are inevitable, then why not agree to the diplomatic parameters of two states based on the peace proposal of the previous Israeli government? Why lead this territorial conflict into becoming a religious conflict? Is it not time for Netanyahu to stop avoiding his and the nation's obligation to make peace with the Palestinians?

Smadar Meiri
Thornhill, Ont.

Look at Abbas, not the Mufti

Much has been made of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's misstatement that it was the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem who convinced Hitler to implement the final solution.

Let's concentrate on relevant misstatements by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas that there were never any Jewish Temples and that Jesus Christ was a Palestinian. Hitler needed no encouragement in his effort to annihilate the Jewish People.

Bert Raphael
Toronto

Question of the week

Late last month, the Rabbinical Council of America, the main modern Orthodox rabbinical group, voted against the ordination or hiring of women rabbis. What do you think of this decision?

Let us know in 150 words or less at cjninfo@gmail.com

Letters to the editor are welcome in English or French. All letters must bear the sender's name, address and telephone number. We reserve the right to edit and condense letters.

Correction

The Nov. 5 letter, "Renewed memorial a 'shandeh'" was written by Andrew Meles of Toronto. Incorrect information appeared last week. *The CJN* regrets the error.

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RABBI·2·RABBI

Orthodoxy and female rabbis

Is the recent rabbinical resolution against ordaining women a reaffirmation of tradition, or the beginning of a larger debate?

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
TEMPLE EMANU-EL BETH SHOLOM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Grushcow: The Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) just came out with a rejection of Orthodox women's ordination and any rabbinic-type titles or roles for women.

As a rabbi in the Reform movement, which has been ordaining women for over 40 years, I am in many ways an outsider to this debate and the beneficiary of the struggles of those who came before me.

However, I have the privilege of serving the Montreal Jewish community and am proud to have as colleagues here two Orthodox women who are also clergy. I see them serving faithfully within their understanding of Halachah, and, like most people who break barriers, they excel at what they do.

At the same time, no one is forced to hire them or agree with the halachic grounding for their ordination. Why is this seen as such a threat?

Rabbi Korobkin: I have no doubt that the Orthodox women who serve as clergy in Montreal are doing excellent work.

Women serve in various capacities in religious leadership roles throughout the Orthodox world. Our schools have female headmasters, principals and religious studies instructors. Our communities have *yoatzot Halachah* (experts in family purity law), Torah scholars and hospital chaplains (Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children's Jewish chaplain was the recently retired Gitty Edery, an Orthodox lady who served with great distinction for many years).

My wife and I serve our shul as rabbi and rebbetzin, and I can assure you that her role is just as vital of a leadership position as mine.

The latest resolution addresses the specific issue of conferring ordination. Orthodox tradition only permits this formal rabbinic appointment for men, just as Mormons only permit formal priesthood ordination for men. Changing ordination rules is viewed by many in our circles to be as much of a deviation from Orthodoxy as the removal of the mechitzah or the installation of an organ in the synagogue.

So I wouldn't characterize it as reacting to a "threat," but rather as a reformulation of Orthodoxy's commitment to *mesorah* (tradition).

Rabbi Grushcow: I hear you, and I understand that we work within very different understandings of Jewish law, but the Jews I know who are Orthodox and support the ordination of women also are deeply connected with, and respectful of, *mesorah*.

I also know that the role of rebbetzin is time-honoured and significant in many Orthodox communities. But why should a woman have to marry a man who is a rabbi to serve as a spiritual leader? Why would one not want every spiritual leader to be trained and recognized as such (not to mention paid a salary)?

There is a tension here, of course. Judaism is about a tradition passed down for millennia, and the needs of the community usually outweigh individual needs. The answer cannot simply be that Orthodox women want to be rabbis so every other issue disappears. But it seems to me – again, with the humility of an outsider – that the Orthodox community is enriched by the spiritual leadership of all who have the ability and desire to serve.

My hope is that those who are in this debate will be able to go forward in a way that makes more room within the Jewish community, not less. Orthodox, Conservative, Reform – all are relatively recent groupings in terms of Jewish history, and none of us knows for certain which way is the best way forward.

It seems to me that there should be room enough for all of us in Jewish life, even with our disagreements.

Rabbi Korobkin: This is why many RCA members and officers – myself included – while agreeing with the substance of the resolution nonetheless voted against it. We believe that now is not the time to reaffirm our differences, but rather to find positive ways to work together amid our disagreements, even when those disagreements are about the very same *mesorah* we both wish to uphold.

My hope is that when the hoopla of this latest resolution dies down, Orthodox leaders will be able to more productively focus inward on the real social and religious ills of our communities, and then positively engage in outreach to the rest of the Jewish community to make Klal Yisrael more cohesive and strong. I look forward to sharing our common goals and strengths. ■

How to reach us

Vol. XLV, No. 44 (2,220)*

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Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation
July 14, 2015

Postmaster: Please return 29Bs and changes of address to CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7
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From the Archives | Histadrut Conference

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

The caption provided for this picture last week was incorrect. It should have read: Harry Simon, director of the Canadian Labour Congress, addresses a Histadrut conference in Toronto, 1979. Former Toronto mayor Philip Givens, president of CZF Canada at the time, and his wife Min are seated on the left.

SeeJN | Shall we dance?

KELLY CONNELLY/BAYCREST PHOTO

Mendel and Valerie Good have been dancing the tango for more than 64 years of marriage. Now in wheelchairs and living at Baycrest's Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged, the couple enjoyed the ballroom dance once again Nov. 6 at the Café Europa social program for Holocaust survivors. Dance movement therapist Krista Samborsky, left, and recreation therapist Amber Cockburn helped the couple enjoy their favourite Latin tango, *La Cumparsita*. Media were on hand to capture the moment. Next year Baycrest and the National Ballet School will lead a research study in this arts-based therapy with cognitively-frail, long-term care residents.

From Yoni's Desk

Does ordination ruling herald a split in Orthodoxy?

Is there room for women in the Orthodox rabbinate? The answer may be no or yes, depending on who you ask.

Earlier this month, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), the leading institution of Orthodox rabbis, issued a resolution reiterating its 2010 verdict on the subject of female rabbis. Back then, the RCA ruled it "cannot accept either the ordination of women or the recognition of women as members of the Orthodox rabbinate, regardless of the title." While many, including some rabbis associated with the RCA, questioned the timing of this latest statement, its meaning is not in doubt: for mainstream Orthodoxy, the idea of female rabbis remains a no-go.

And yet, the facts on the ground might suggest otherwise. A number of women are currently establishing their place in modern Orthodox communities, where they have achieved ordination under the labels "maharat" and "rabba," clever titles meant to carry the same weight as "rabbi" without resorting to that specific terminology. Two of those maharot – Abby Brown Scheier and Rachel Kohl Finegold, who are both *CJN* contributors – currently work in Montreal. (There are no other maharot working in Canada at present.)

So, while some leading rabbis pronounce from atop the Orthodox universe, the existence of these maharot, not to mention the Orthodox (male) rabbis who signed off on their ordinations, suggest that the RCA may not have the only word on the subject.

In this week's *CJN*, we report on the practical implications of the RCA's ruling and consider some of the underlying currents behind its decision. Reporter Sheri Shefa talks to maharot Brown Scheier and Kohl Finegold (see page 15), while, in our Rabbi 2 Rabbi column, rabbis Lisa Grushcow and Daniel Korobkin debate how the resolution is being perceived among both the Orthodox and the larger Jewish community (see page 4).

This is potentially a seminal moment for Orthodox Judaism. The RCA had no practical reason to restate its position on female rabbis at this moment – indeed, Rabbi Korobkin explains that he voted against the resolution for that very reason, even though he agreed with its substance. But Orthodox rabbis may have felt a need to distance themselves from the leaders of the "open Orthodox" movement, which, among its causes, has backed female ordination.

The question now is whether mainstream Orthodoxy and its open iteration can coexist. And the split in Orthodoxy encompasses much more than female rabbis – there is the issue of male ordination, too. This past June, Rabbi Avi Weiss, one of the architects of open Orthodoxy, quit the RCA because it would not accept rabbis ordained by his institution. Also, the open Orthodox service – which invites women to lead the congregation in prayer, layn the Torah and receive certain aliyot, and generally observes an ethos of equality – differs significantly from traditional Orthodoxy.

It's hard to see how the Orthodox community can stick together through this, especially when the RCA and leaders of open Orthodoxy don't seem inclined to find a solution. For Orthodoxy – in all its facets – to flourish, these two groups may have to go their separate ways, and agree to disagree. It wouldn't be the first time that's happened in Jewish history. ■ — YONI

INTERVIEW

Author paints an Eichmann at odds with Arendt's account

Ron Csillag

"This book is an accident."

Few authors, let alone one of a well-received, ground-breaking history, would begin an interview that way.

But Bettina Stangneth is no ordinary author. For one, she freely concedes that she's not a historian but a philosopher. Her areas of study are Immanuel Kant's concept of radical evil, and the theory of lying. A German non-Jew, she's also written about anti-Semitism.

So one might say that her book about Adolf Eichmann was a natural progression.

After hundreds of books on him, what's left to say about Eichmann, one of the main architects of the Final Solution. Plenty, it turns out.

Famously, Eichmann, who was in charge of Jewish affairs during the Third Reich, escaped from Europe to Argentina in 1950 and lived in Buenos Aires under the alias Ricardo Klement. The story is the stuff of Hollywood: he was abducted by Mossad agents in a top secret operation in 1960 and brought to Israel for what was billed as the trial of the century. Found guilty of war crimes, he was hanged in 1962.

Probably the most famous book on the trial was Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil.*

But what about that brief Argentine interregnum? What did Eichmann do, say, write and think during that lost decade? Was he the banal clerk in private life as he would later present in the witness box?

The voluminous answer is contained in Stangneth's *Eichmann Before Jerusalem: The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer* (Vintage Books), a compelling and upending look at a man widely believed to have kept a low profile, but didn't.

"I had no intention to write a book about Eichmann. This book is an accident," Stangneth, a 49-year-old resident of Hamburg told *The CJN* in Toronto, where she had come as one of three finalists for the prestigious Cundill Prize in History (she did not win the grand prize, which went to a book on the League of Nations).

"I am a philosopher. I am not a historian. My main subject...is the way humans deal with truth and honesty. I figured out a special way to read lies, to decipher lies. I wanted to show that my method works." She sought a way to employ this program (too complex to explain here) as a source for those who rely on hard truths, such as historians and judges.

After reading Arendt, she thought, "take Eichmann, for example. I was absolutely sure that historians' work was done, that there was no need to go to archives." But after reading everything she could get her hands on about the subject, "I found so many mistakes. I said, 'OK, I have to learn how to be a historian. I have to go to the archives.' "

She was glad she did because "everything changed."

Stangneth found a man at odds with the enduring images that had grown around him, of a recluse who lived in constant fear of capture, and the one nurtured by Arendt: that during the war, he had been merely a dull, plodding bureaucrat who was simply following orders – a "small cog in the machine."

To the contrary, in the words of one reviewer, Stangneth reveals "a skilled social manipulator with a pronounced ability to reinvent himself, an ideological warrior unrepentant about the past and eager to continue the racial war against the Jews."

Throughout his exile, Eichmann remained a passionate and open Nazi. He

Bettina Stangneth DIETER RIELK PHOTO

proudly signed photos with the flourish, "Adolf Eichmann – SS-¬Obersturmbannführer (retired)," and even boasted that the deportation of more than 400,000 Hungarian Jews was his masterpiece. He never denied his true identity.

"The fanatical National Socialist was still on active duty," Stangneth writes. "One thing in particular stands out: Not once during his escape and exile did Eichmann seek the shadows or try to act in secrecy. He wanted to be visible in Argentina and he wanted to be viewed as he once had been: as the symbol of a new age."

The real gold mine for Stangneth was listening to taped conversations with Eichmann made by a Dutch former SS journalist, Willem Stassen during salons attended by a small group of Nazis and their sympathizers.

Eichmann's only regret, he told Sassen, was not killing more Jews. "If we had killed 10.3 million, I would be satisfied, and would say, 'good, we have destroyed an enemy.' We would have fulfilled our duty to our blood and our people...if we had exterminated the most cunning intellect of all the human intellects alive today."

Stangneth admits she was surprised by Eichmann's brazenness but also by the fact that he was surrounded by many other German Nazis who had been shielded by Argentine president Juan Peron and the Vatican.

"There was a large community of Nazis, sitting there in Buenos Aires, talking and thinking and discussing like [it was] 1940," she said. "What you have to understand is there was no voice of reason in this room. They were all evil."

Eichmann was a compulsive writer, always jotting and making notes. Convinced of his innocence, he even drafted a letter to German chancellor Konrad Adenauer offering to return to Germany to stand trial.

And as Stangneth further discovered, he wasn't the dullard portrayed by Arendt but a well-read mind who had studied Judaism and its texts, and expounded on Kant, Aristotle, Nietzsche and Spinoza.

"I discovered Eichmann the thinker," Stangneth told *The CJN.*

But as an expert on lying, Stangneth knew a liar when she encountered one. Eichmann "lied over 2.5 million people to their deaths."

Germany, she went on, knew of his exact location as early as 1952. "We know perfectly well that had no consequences," the author noted. "The Germans kept it a secret even from the United States."

With the veil lifted on Eichmann in Argentina, is there anything left to say about one of history's greatest monsters?

"Perhaps the story is finished," Stangneth said, "but there could be so many more details. I do not believe in big surprises anymore. But who knows?" ■

Ron Csillag is a frequent contributor to The CJN.

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Six Jewish MPs head to Ottawa

The CJN talks to our community's newest members of Parliament

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

The Liberal tide that swept away the Conservative government of Stephen Harper brought in what is believed to be a record six MPs of Jewish lineage – one of whom was appointed to cabinet.

Winnipeg South Centre MP Jim Carr, was named minister of natural resources and will have responsibility for overseeing hot-button issues such as the Keystone XL Pipeline in the United States as well as Northern Gateway, which the Liberals opposed prior to the election, and Energy East.

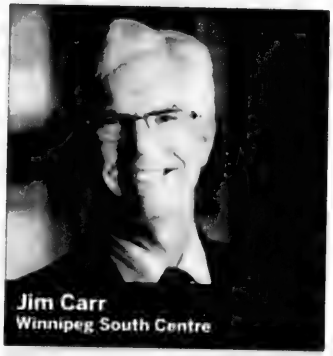
Carr, 64, is a former provincial politician in Manitoba and served as president of the Business Council of Manitoba. He was also a founding board member of the Canada West Foundation, a public policy and research NGO.

Of the incoming MPs, two hail from Quebec, three reside in and around Toronto, while Carr is the sole westerner.

At the same time, a handful of prominent Jewish MPs departed the scene. Longtime Mount Royal Liberal MP Irwin Cotler, who served as justice minister and attorney general in earlier Liberal governments, announced his retirement prior to the election. He was first elected in the Montreal riding in 1999.

Conservative MP Joe Oliver, who served as finance minister in the outgoing government – the first Jew to ever hold the position – was defeated in Eglinton-Lawrence, while his Tory colleague, Mark Adler, was similarly ousted in York Centre. Both ridings run along Toronto's Bathurst Street corridor and are home to thousands of Jewish voters.

In interviews with *The CJN*, the incoming MPs described their background, their ties to the Jewish community and how their Jewish heritage and being the children or grandchildren of immigrants helped inform their political views.



Jim Carr
Winnipeg South Centre

Jim Carr is well aware of the immigrant experience. His family's experience in Canada dates back to Czarist times. Carr is the grandson of immigrants who fled Russian pogroms in 1906.

> *I can't separate my values and political views from my identity as a Canadian and as a member of the Jewish community.*

"They came with nothing – no skills, no money – just a thirst for freedom for their children and grandchildren," he said in an interview prior to being selected to cabinet.

Carr grew up in a middle class household in the River Heights neighbourhood of Winnipeg. He had his bar mitzvah in 1964 at Congregation Shaarey Zedek.

"I've been part of the community all my life," he said.

He's also had a rather eclectic career, playing oboe in the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, working as a journalist for the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the CBC, and was the founding CEO of the Business Council of Manitoba. He also served in the provincial legislature as a critic in the areas of energy, education, urban affairs and constitutional matters.

Outside of politics he was a founding member of Arab-Jewish Dialogue of Winnipeg, and he calls himself, "a passionate supporter of the State of Israel, which I have visited many times."

Those life experiences shaped the values that he will bring to Ottawa.

"I can't separate my values and political views from my identity as a Canadian and as a member of the Jewish community," he said. ■

Michael Levitt
York Centre

Michael Levitt had a traditional Jewish upbringing, just not in a traditional Jewish setting. The incoming MP for York Centre, Levitt attended synagogue and participated in youth groups in his native Scotland, where the Jewish community was small, tight-knit and traditional. It wasn't until his family moved to Canada when he was a teenager that he was able to partake in the full array of communal activities.

> *Levitt has visited Israel three times in recent years.*

And partake he did. His CV listing his involvement in things Jewish is extensive. Among the most impactful involvements was his participation in a leadership training program under the auspices of the United Jewish Appeal. "I found it absolutely fascinating," he said.

He went on to serve as chair of the young adult division of the UJA and assisted in the UJA fundraising campaign, which raises money for a variety of Jewish agencies and for Israel.

He is a founding member of the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee and he co-chaired Liberal Friends of Israel.

For Levitt, a partner and vice-president of business development for the Benjamin Group in Toronto, his Jewish heritage "absolutely" shaped the values he brings with him to Ottawa. Imbued with the spirit of tikkun olam, or repairing the world, he has particular empathy for seniors on fixed incomes, refugees and young people looking for jobs.

Levitt has visited Israel three times in recent years and expects his knowledge of the country will put him in a good position to inform his caucus colleagues about the challenges it faces. ■

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Karina Gould
Burlington

Karina Gould calls herself "a fresh voice for Burlington," her hometown.

Although she is "not an active practitioner of Judaism," she maintains her heritage through the celebration of Chanukah, Purim and Yom Kippur.

> *Israel is a beautiful country. It's unique in the world. It has difficult challenges.*

Gould is Jewish on her father's side. Her paternal grandparents were Holocaust survivors from Czechoslovakia. Her grandfather was deported to Theresienstadt, then to Dachau and Auschwitz. Though separated during the war, her paternal grandparents were reunited afterward.

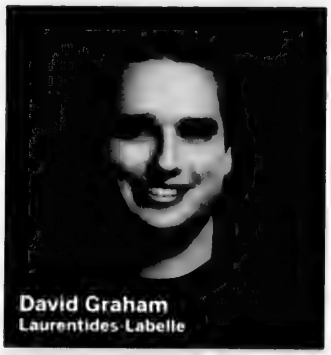
Her father met her mother, who is from Germany, while both were in Israel volunteering on Kibbutz Naot – where the sandals are made.

While in Israel, her father visited her grandfather's lifelong friend, a man who had been left for dead in a pile of corpses, but who had been rescued by her grandfather.

Gould visited Israel on a Birthright trip and stayed longer for a personal visit. Although she doesn't consider herself a Zionist – "it's not something that I thought about" – Gould admires the Jewish state.

"Israel is a beautiful country. It's unique in the world. It has difficult challenges." She particularly admires the country's diversity and hopes for a solution that will allow it to peacefully coexist with its neighbours.

Gould believes her family heritage plays a big role in shaping her political values. "My family was accepted and welcomed into Canada after a difficult experience," she said. "Canadian values of tolerance and diversity were not just important for my family, but for others. Canada provided the opportunity to grow and to thrive." ■



David Graham
Laurentides-Labelle

Before incoming Jewish MPs can play Jewish geography with their colleague David Graham, they might well be better off studying the science of geography – as in maps and charts. That way they'll be able to find the riding the Quebec MP represents. Graham was elected to represent Laurentides-Labelle, northwest of Montreal in the middle of cottage country and en route to the skiing venue Mont-Tremblant.

His family has lived in small-town Quebec for many years, he said, and his grandmother was an Olympic-level skier in her day. His great-grandfather, Hersh Wolofsky (Wolowski) was founder of *Keneder Adler*, a Yiddish-language newspaper that served the largely Jewish immigrant population of Montreal in the early 1900s.

Graham, 34, attended weekend Hebrew school as a young boy and today considers himself "a Reconstructionist Jew… culturally very Jewish."

"I happen to be a Jew who happens to be in politics," he said. "Jewish culture is very community-oriented culture by nature. It had an enormous impact on my values," he said, with the feeling that "community comes first."

That has led him to champion a number of community initiatives, from promoting free software and calling for better public transportation.

Advocating for his community will be job one when he gets to Ottawa, he said. "My priority is my community."

Laurentides-Labelle is "a poor riding" with an older population that lacks Internet and cellphone connectivity, he said. Getting government to provide infrastructure support is necessary for the future of the area. "How are you going to keep youth if they can't get the Internet?" Graham asked.

As for the Middle East, he said, "I absolutely believe in Israel's right to exist," adding that the region is a very complicated place and he would defer to the government leadership in crafting policy in the area. "I have great faith that [Prime Minister] Justin Trudeau knows who to turn to for the best advice." ■

Julie Dabrusin
Toronto-Danforth

Julie Dabrusin grew up in Montreal, but moved to Toronto to attend law school. She met a guy, got married and never moved back.

Today she lives in the Danforth area of Toronto and will represent Toronto-Danforth in Parliament.

Growing up, she attended Hebrew school regularly and remembers it as "an important part of my week."

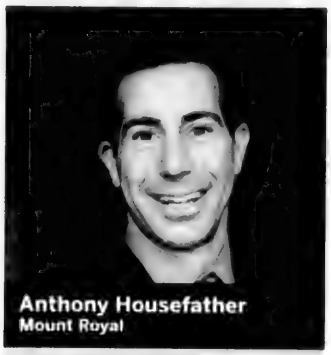
Her Jewish identity is an important part of her life, as is her feeling of being part of a larger multicultural community.

> *What I take from my Jewish background is a lot of study and learning, debate and advocacy. That ties into being involved in politics.*

"What I take from my Jewish background is a lot of study and learning, debate and advocacy," she said. "That ties into being involved in politics."

Dabrusin has visited Israel twice, first as part of a CEGEP program that included volunteer work on a kibbutz and later, while attending McGill University, on an archeological dig that unearthed a Byzantine church.

"Israel is a beautiful country with a strong and resilient population… As a mother [of two], I understand Israelis wanting to be safe and secure," she said. ■



Anthony Housefather
Mount Royal

The origins of the family name Housefather are lost in the mists of time, but according to family lore, there was probably an innkeeper or someone who ran an orphanage somewhere in Bukovina, Romania, who adopted the name, or at least the pre-anglicized version of it.

That connection to the Austro-Hungarian empire is way in the past – all of Anthony Housefather's grandparents were born in Montreal, as was he. Housefather, who has served as mayor of Cote-St.-Luc since 2005, was recently elected MP in the Liberal bastion of Mount Royal, the seat vacated by Irwin Cotler. The riding has a higher proportion of Jews than any in Canada, he said.

Like his predecessor, Housefather has substantial links to the Jewish community. He attended Herzliah High School and is fluent in Hebrew. He served on the executive of Canadian Jewish Congress' Quebec region and was part of a group tasked with finding ways to retain young Jewish Montrealers who were leaving for greener pastures.

He also has longstanding ties to the Maccabi movement, with his first exposure to the Jewish sports organization as a teenager attending youth games in Memphis. At the 2013 Maccabiah Games in Israel, he won seven medals, two silver and five bronze, in a variety of masters swimming events.

"Being involved in the community, Jewish and non-Jewish, is an important part of our [family] values," he said.

Given his role in local government, he sees himself as an advocate for municipal interests at the federal level.

He also considers himself as someone who will speak up for the Jewish community and reflect their concerns over the wellbeing of the State of Israel.

"I'm passionate about the State of Israel, and I certainly [understand] the security issues [it] faces, given its borders and the narrowness of the country… I'm pretty well attuned to the policy issues on Israel. We committed in the election that we'd have Israel's back, and support for Israel is a Canadian value," he said. ■

My fruitful trip to Winnipeg

Avrum Rosensweig

It is Nov. 1, and I am in Winnipeg, the scholar in residence at Congregation Etz Chaim on Matheson Avenue.

What a delightful weekend it has been.

A number of months back, Calgary-born Rabbi Larry Lander of Congregation Etz Chaim asked if I would come to spend Shabbat with his congregation. We negotiated the time. The beginning of November would work. I was honoured.

Of course, I was nervous that I would step off the plane into two feet of snow and encounter -40 C weather. That, however, was not the case. As I type this, the weather is 7 C with not a snowflake in sight. My compact Fiat is gripping the road, and I have not spotted a Winnipeg dog wearing full winter regalia.

I have found, however, that Winnipeg Jews are a warm bunch who have extended themselves to me in every way possible. As they say in Yiddish, it's a *mechayeh*, in contrast to much of the Toronto Jewish community, which can be unwelcoming and cold in nature. (While a number of shuls there have successfully worked on turning up their warmth, there is still much to be done.)

Upon arrival at my hotel, I discovered a box of pastries, a bag of fresh fruit and bottles of water on my desk, delivered by Lina Streltsov, the very authentic shul program director. The snacks were accompanied by a hand-written welcome note. The front desk hotel staff commented later on Lina's lovely demeanour. Nice touch!

Rabbi Lander, the president of the shul, the gabbai, the ba'al koreh and the congregation in general have gone out of their way to make me feel at home. At one point, prior to my after-davening workshop, the rabbi stood in the kiddush line and assembled a plate of food for me. In my speech, I mentioned what tremendous character traits this man has.

During my stay, I also discovered a raised consciousness among the Winnipeg Jewish community having to do with aboriginal issues. Winnipeg has the largest aboriginal population in Canada, numbering some 70,000 people. (Its total population is 683,000.)

As you might imagine, there is much greater interaction between the Jewish and aboriginal communities here than there is elsewhere.

After speaking, I was approached by a number of congregants who either told me about their involvement with local aboriginal communities or about their desire to become involved in Ve'ahavta's Jewish-aboriginal initiatives. It was deeply inspiring to hear this.

I was also very fortunate to run into Phil Fontaine, former chief of the Assembly of First Nations who is also the honorary co-chair of Ve'ahavta's Jewish-aboriginal initiatives, along with Toronto businessman Larry Tanenbaum and former prime minister Paul Martin.

I told Phil about Ve'ahavta's recent professional development day for educators in Toronto's Jewish school system, held at Leo Baeck School and facilitated by aboriginal educators. I let him know the goal of the PD day was to teach the real history of aboriginal peoples in Canada, including residential schools. He was most proud of our community recognizing that the PD day was in response to recommendations coming out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

All in all, my first time in Winnipeg has been most fruitful. My time with the Jewish community has been productive and heimish. While I'm happy I missed the snow and the frigid weather, I could not have asked for a nicer Shabbat and a more embracing community.

Wouldn't it be nice if Jewish communities across Canada could get to know each other more so we could have some shared goals? We could learn a lot from one another.

I look forward to returning to this town and possibly working together on a tikkun olam program. ■

Life at the edge of a knife

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz

Even terror campaigns use marketing techniques. The current wave of violence in Israel is knife-themed, and this theme is reinforced with sermons, YouTube videos, and Facebook posts. The resulting "knife intifadah" is the terrorist equivalent of the ice bucket challenge: a social media campaign that goes viral, except that instead of curing disease, the "knife intifadah" murders grandfathers.

And now Israelis find themselves at the edge of a knife. Questions about how to defend against anonymous assailants hiding knives have confounded security experts. But other, more significant questions arise as well. Terror is psychological warfare, an attempt to destroy the Israeli soul. One must wonder: can Israel hold on to her values and her morale at the edge of the knife?

This question is not new. Persecution has dogged the Jewish People, and for the last two millennia, they have needed to meet the spiritual challenge of oppression. And the way to do that, to quote the Talmud, is recognize that "even if you have a sharp sword held to your neck," you must never lose your faith and your hope.

And now, with a sharp blade being pointed at Israel's neck, her challenge is to avoid unrestrained hatred. Rabbi David Stav made a public ruling that once an attacker is subdued, it is forbidden by Halachah to injure them in any way. Sadly, there are those who consider this ruling too liberal, and after I posted in support of Rabbi Stav on my own Facebook page, I got criticism for being "naive." But the moral and halachic logic of Rabbi Stav's decision is impeccable, and the importance of this ruling cannot be overstated. Yes, vigilante justice might feel satisfying when watching an action movie; but in actuality taking the law into your own hands, aside from being wildly immoral, undermines the rule of law. Gun-wielding activists deciding who shall live and who shall die will end up making terrible mistakes in the process, and some may be emboldened to go on and use violence for political ends as well.

> *Terror is psychological warfare, an attempt to destroy the Israeli soul.*

In the Middle Ages, when there was often more than enough reason for Jews to be embittered at their neighbours, Jews refused, even at the edge of the knife, to abandon their faith in humanity. Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg, who experienced multiple persecutions in his own life, insisted that for a Jew to act dishonestly to a non-Jew was not only theft, but a desecration of God's name. This ruling points to the dogged determination of medieval Jews to maintain their ethics, even with a sword held to the throat; Rabbi Stav's ruling is a continuation of that tradition.

The edge of a knife also challenges one's morale as well. The difficulty of recent weeks lends itself to pessimism, bitterness and hopelessness, with the worry that this new wave of terror will make it impossible to live a normal life. Here, too, is a spiritual challenge at the edge of a knife – and to maintain optimism despite it all is nothing short of heroic.

Chana Henkin's son and daughter-in-law were brutally murdered in a terror attack, leaving four young children as orphans. Despite this tragedy, Henkin, a well respected Jewish educator, has not wavered in her determination, and continues to emphasize to her students the importance of optimism. In one recent lecture she told them that: "unfortunately… many lives have been lost. But… I believe that things have never been better for the Jewish People than they are right now… We are all being tested…[but] we must know that we are marching forward, we have a role, and we will fulfil that role."

This remarkable determination comes from someone who is living in the shadow of death. And if other Israelis can hold on to their morale and morality with similar determination, they will triumph, even when living at the edge of a knife. ■

Rabbis must lead, not follow

Rabbi Dow Marmur

Despite the establishment of many new institutions that train non-Orthodox rabbis for the United States and other countries, including Canada, and notwithstanding the large proportion of female graduates, it seems that the total number of those who nowadays want to serve the Jewish people as rabbis is smaller than when there were few seminaries and only men were ordained.

Recruitment difficulty isn't given as a reason for the decision last September by the Reconstructionist Rabbinic College in Philadelphia to admit students with non-Jewish spouses. But it's impossible to ignore it as an important factor in this radical change of policy.

According to college president Rabbi Deborah Waxman, the change is primarily the result of accepting the reality that more than half of all American married Jews have non-Jewish spouses. Writing in the *Huffington Post*, she stated that her college has "chosen to stop fighting against intermarriage and to concentrate on building a vital Jewish future." It seeks to help those who live in mixed families yet "want to remain Jewish and to live in Jewish community." Rabbis with non-Jewish spouses, she suggests, will not only reflect this reality, but they'll be better equipped to reach out to intermarried Jews.

Janet Eisner, editor of the *Forward*, disagrees. Though only about one per cent of Jews in the United States are card-carrying Reconstructionists, the movement has always had "an outsized effect on American Jewry." She reminds her readers that Reconstructionism often embraced progressive stands years or decades before the larger liberal denominations followed. The two small seminaries that already admit students with non-Jewish spouses are on the margin of Jewish life. Not so the Reconstructionist College.

Eisner's argument is cogent: "Clergy don't reflect their congregations. Clergy lead their congregations – and do so not as leaders who bow to the fashion and trends of the moment, but as vivid exemplars of our best norms and intentions, as strong aspirational figures."

Unlike say a Jewish studies professor at a university, a rabbi doesn't just teach Torah, a rabbi *is* Torah. The authentic exponent of Judaism must embody its values and serve as a Jewish role model. As tradition has it, this means also that what the rabbi does in private is of concern to the community. It's impossible to see how a Jewish spiritual leader whose spouse is an adherent of another faith or who has a Christmas tree at home for his or her non-Jewish children can qualify as a rabbi reflecting authentic Jewish life.

Of course, the rabbi must reach out to the entire community, including the intermarried. Integrating such families is a sacred task today. But can a rabbi do so by being part of the problem rather than the solution?

We know from experience that what one of the three mainstream liberal movements – Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist – decides, the others soon follow, because they compete for the same potential members. Recruitment isn't only a problem for rabbinic schools but also for congregations.

As I wrote on this page not long ago, I've now come to accept the reality, indeed the necessity, that a person should be a full member of a congregation if she or he has only one Jewish parent – mother or father. But what's sufficient for members of congregations cannot be enough for those who lead them.

We therefore have good reason to applaud the stance of Dorshei Emet, the Reconstructionist congregation in Montreal that decided to distance itself from the decision to ordain intermarried rabbis. Its sister congregation in Toronto, we're told, hasn't yet declared its intentions. Let's hope it follows suit.

Even if accepting intermarried rabbis reflects the spirit of our age, we have much to learn from Charles Spurgeon, a 19th-century Baptist preacher in England, who noted "the distinction between serving your own generation and being a slave to it." Following current trends in the guise of serving the people may turn rabbis into slaves. ■

How Canada can help stem the Syrian refugee crisis

Sheryl Saperia

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is facing the complexities of implementing his laudable campaign pledge to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by the end of the year. The commitment to grant safe haven to these individuals is consistent with the thematic messaging that permeated the Liberal party's election campaign, including compassion and respect for human rights.

However, any policy attempting to claim a human rights mantle in this effort should not be focused solely on providing assistance to victims *after* the bloodshed. One critical way in which Canada can contribute to ending the atrocities in Syria, rather than exclusively dealing with their aftermath, is by helping to disrupt the Iran-Syria nexus.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has waged a ruthless and relentless struggle to remain in power in Damascus. He has been propped up by the Iranian regime, which has provided him with funds, weapons, advisors and military personnel as part of its own ambitious campaign to strengthen regional proxies and realize its hegemonic ambitions. The egregious human rights violations of these two players need to be addressed as part of a balanced human rights policy in Canada.

Trudeau should therefore ensure that both Syria and Iran remain listed as state sponsors of terror pursuant to the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act. Canadian sanctions under the Special Economic Measures Act (SEMA) against the two states should similarly continue. If the Liberal government wishes to lift nuclear-related sanctions against Iran in credence to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, sanctions should instead be imposed on Tehran for its human rights abuses. This is consistent with a motion unanimously adopted in 2014 by the House of Commons subcommittee on international human rights, which called for the imposition of SEMA sanctions on Iranian human rights violators.

Moreover, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) cannot be given a pass by Ottawa. The IRGC, it must be recalled, has been found culpable for terrorist acts around the world and is the vanguard for the regime's violent repression of Iranian citizens. One of its branches, the Quds Force, is a listed terrorist entity in Canada. In 2012, the Liberal Party of Canada urged the Conservative government to go further and designate the IRGC in its entirety as a terrorist group. Interim Leader Bob Rae lamented at the time: "For years, the Liberal Party of Canada has joined with communities across Canada calling on the Harper Conservatives to list the entire IRGC as a terrorist entity, and this government still refuses to do so."

Under Trudeau's leadership, Liberal foreign affairs critic Marc Garneau called for the entire IRGC to be placed on Canada's list of terrorist entities as recently as March 2015. Now in power, the new Liberal government should make this a reality.

In fact, there is more reason than ever to issue a blanket designation of the IRGC. Ali Alfoneh, my colleague at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, has noted that of the recent IRGC fatalities in Syria, an increasing number are coming from IRGC ground forces rather than the Quds Force. The implication is that Iranian intervention in the Syrian civil war is blurring the distinctions between the branches of the IRGC and, in Alfoneh's words, "effectively turning the entire Guard into an expeditionary force."

Lastly, it behooves policymakers to understand that renewing economic ties with Iran translates into contracts with the IRGC, which controls at least one-sixth of the Iranian economy. Money in the IRGC's coffers means greater resources to torture Iranian citizens and facilitate Assad's ethnic cleansing of Sunni Muslims.

Trudeau is not faced with an either/or scenario. Taking aim at the heinous violators of human rights is a necessary augmentation to rebuilding the lives of their victims. Maintaining a tough stance against Iran and Syria, two of the prime contributors to the Syrian refugee crisis, is entirely consistent with a Liberal vision for a more caring Canada. ■

Sheryl Saperia is director of policy for Canada at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

News

Dion's remarks on Israel come under scrutiny

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During the recent election campaign, candidates for the Conservative party frequently cited the government's steadfast support of Israel and suggested that things might be different under a Liberal government. But Liberal leader – and now prime minister – Justin Trudeau always maintained that support for Israel is not a partisan issue.

Last week, Canada's newly minted foreign affairs minister, Stéphane Dion, gave two interviews in which it was reported that he saw Israel as an ally, but wanted Canada to return to a role as an "honest broker" in the Middle East while improving relations with other countries in the region.

Does that signal a change in Canadian policy?

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), warns against making that interpretation. In his French-language television interview, Dion never used the term "honest broker" and there are no quotes attributable to him in the print article by *iPolitics* in which he used those words, Fogel said.

In his radio talk, Dion referred to Israel as an ally of Canada and that he wanted to remove Israel as a wedge issue, a clear reference to the Liberal perception of how the Conservatives managed the Israel file, Fogel said.

Dion's reference to Israel as an ally marks something of a departure. "Previous Liberal governments were never comfortable using the word 'ally'. That was something introduced with the Harper government," Fogel stated. "It's a formulation that continues."

Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion

> *He said Canada supported Israel and that it is important for Canada to develop positive relations with Israel's neighbouring countries.*
>
> **Prof. Nelson Wiseman**
> **University of Toronto**

In the radio interview, Dion was asked if he wished to make Canada's Mideast policy more balanced, and he replied that he wanted it to be "effective and open," Fogel added.

Avi Benlolo, CEO of Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, offered a different perspective. He said Dion's comments are worrisome.

Taking the news report at face value, Benlolo said the suggestion Canada would adopt an honest-broker role between Israel and its neighbours causes some "trepidation. We're observing the atmosphere. We don't know which way the wind will blow."

Benlolo said despite Trudeau's assurances that Canada would stand steadfastly with its ally, Israel, he worries "we could also go back to where the Liberals used to be, and see a more neutral position," including at the United Nations.

Canada should take the side of its ally, the only democracy in the Middle East that respects individual rights, he said.

Nelson Wiseman, a professor of political science at the University of Toronto, said he saw no red flags with Dion's reported comments. "He said Canada supported Israel and that it is important for Canada to develop positive relations with Israel's neighbouring countries." Wiseman said Dion mentions Lebanon, but not Palestine.

As to improving relations with countries other than Israel, Wiseman said that under the previous government, Canada had a mixed record. Canada concluded a huge arms deal with Saudi Arabia and signed a free trade agreement with Jordan. But relations with the United Arab Emirates suffered because of a dispute over landing rights at Toronto's Pearson International Airport.

Dion refers to Lebanon specifically in terms of improving relations, which could rebound to Israel's benefit, Wiseman said.

In his *iPolitics* interview, Dion is quoted as saying, "Israel understands that for Canada to be helpful, we need to strengthen our links with countries that are around Israel and should be part of the solution and not becoming completely dysfunctional, as unfortunately, Syria has become."

He also referenced an episode from the time when Liberal John Manley was the foreign affairs minister and he was asked by his Israeli counterpart to contact a group in Lebanon on Israel's behalf. That is something Canada should be in a position to do, Dion stated.

Fogel said he takes issue with the suggestion that Canada's relations with Arab countries suffered because of its strong support of Israel. Canada maintained good relations with Jordan, Lebanon and the Gulf states, he said.

CIJA will be "on top of the file to see that the Liberals remain consistent with their oft-repeated statement there would be no difference in policy" between them and the previous government.

An upcoming test might be close at hand. Later this month the United Nations General Assembly will meet to discuss numerous topics, including Israel.

Dion did not respond to *The CJN*'s requests for comment. ■

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New foreign minister has mixed record on Mideast

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Canada's new foreign affairs minister Stéphane Dion has a mixed record on the Arab-Israeli conflict over his long political career.

Dion, a former Université de Montréal (UdeM) political science professor originally from Quebec City, has since 1996 represented the Montreal riding of St. Laurent, home to a significant Jewish community and increasingly large Arab and Muslim population.

Both communities have traditionally voted Liberal, and Dion has endeavoured to walk a fine line on the Middle East.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's tapping Dion for this key post comes as something of a surprise, because fellow veteran Montreal MP Marc Garneau of Westmount-Notre Dame de Grâce, a vocal supporter of Israel, had been foreign affairs critic. Dion, who led the party from 2006 to 2008, handled the intergovernmental affairs and heritage portfolios.

It was in the city (now borough) of St. Laurent in 2004 where a Jewish elementary school, United Talmud Torahs (UTT), was firebombed by a Lebanese-born Muslim teenager in retaliation, he said, for Israel's killing of a Hamas leader.

Dion, then a cabinet minister, came to the school that morning to denounce the hate crime, which was later judged to be an act of terrorism. However, he had to backpedal on a comment to the effect that it was regrettable that this happened when not all Jews support the policies of then-Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon.

He clarified that, "No matter what one's opinion of the Sharon government's actions, violence is never an acceptable response. When I said, 'Why link all Canadian Jews with the policy of a government?' it was in the context of expressing my admiration for the pluralism of opinions among the Jews of Canada and elsewhere."

At the 2006 party convention where he was selected leader, Dion in his speech ridiculed the new "very right-wing" Conservative government for modelling Canadian foreign policy on that of the United States.

"Today we have... a prime minister who is mirroring the style of his hero to the point that [then-] president [George W.] Bush should be getting royalties from Mr. Harper's speeches."

He had been critical of former prime minister Stephen Harper's support of Israel during its conflict with Hezbollah that summer, calling for a more even-handed approach and an immediate ceasefire.

Stéphane Dion in 2007

During that war, Dion wrote in a *Globe and Mail* article: "When one believes a friend to be mistaken, one should say so," and he suggested that the Lebanese civilian casualties and "breadth of destruction" may increase support for Hezbollah and weaken the Lebanese state without strengthening Israel's security.

Dion stood by those opinions in a conference call with the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee. He also said Canada should send humanitarian aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA), then ruled by Hamas, through "third parties."

Dion had two prominent Jewish community backers in his leadership bid — businessman Stephen Bronfman and former MP and ambassador to Israel David Berger, but few grassroots Jewish delegates supported him.

Jews have appreciated Dion, father of the Clarity Act, for his strong defence of national unity over the years.

However, less than a year into his leadership, Dion was in hot water with the Jewish community for handpicking Jocelyn Coulon, an academic and commentator critical of Israel and the United States, as the Liberal candidate in the Outremont byelection.

Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) and B'nai Brith Canada were dismayed by Coulon's view that the international community should talk to Hamas. He retracted that position after a meeting with community leaders.

Dion had personally chosen Coulon, a UdeM professor, to play a role in moving Canada's foreign policy away from "the current Conservative government's Republican-style approach."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61

WE REFUSE TO BE ENEMIES:
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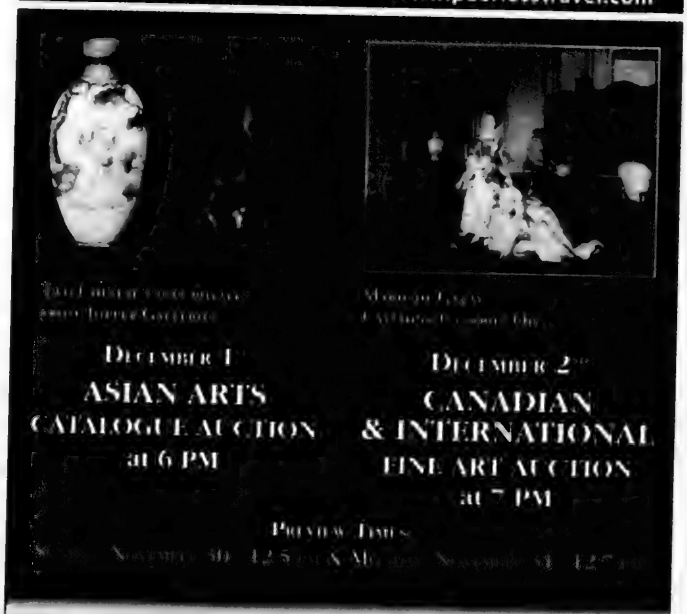

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Trudeau reaches out to CIJA to affirm support for Israel

LILA SARICK
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Prime Minister Justin Trudeau reached out to the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) to reaffirm his support for Israel and his willingness to discuss broader social issues.

In a 10-minute phone call Nov. 2, before being officially sworn in Nov. 4, that CIJA chair David Cape described as "very warm and very friendly," Trudeau expressed his commitment to continue his strong relationship with CIJA.

"He reaffirmed his expectation for the government to work closely with the Jewish community and thanked us for all the work we had done," Cape said.

Trudeau also expressed that "his government would continue the tradition of multipartisan support for Israel," Cape said. "But he said he specifically was hoping we could work together on a broader range of issues."

One issue of particular interest to CIJA is Bill C-51, the anti-terrorism act, which Trudeau had supported when it was introduced by the previous Conservative government. During the election campaign, Trudeau said he intended to amend the bill.

In a presentation to Parliament last spring, CIJA affirmed its support for the bill and suggested ways that oversight of Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Canada's spy agency, should be improved and strengthened.

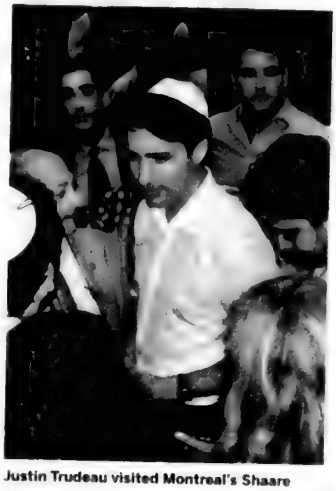
Cape said he reiterated this point to Trudeau Nov. 2.

CIJA is also deeply interested in participating in the national discussion on physician-assisted dying, and Cape said he discussed that with Trudeau as well.

The issue is sure to be debated in the House of Commons soon, after a Supreme Court decision last February gave the government one year to implement new legislation.

CIJA recently emailed members of the community asking for opinions on the issue and heard "passionately expressed thoughts," on the subject, Cape said.

"I said it would be important for us to engage on a number of these social issues and I was hopeful that the Jewish community could be a springboard for his government to create broader support across the populations for this type of social issue," Cape said.



Justin Trudeau visited Montreal's Shaare Zion Congregation in July FILE PHOTO

The current wave of terrorism in Israel was not discussed, but Trudeau "expressed the hope there would be peace ultimately in the region," Cape said.

Cape said he concluded the conversation by introducing Trudeau to the Hebrew word tikvah, meaning hope, a theme that Trudeau repeatedly referred to during his campaign, and one that has great resonance for the Jewish community as well, Cape said.

While there had been some concerns expressed during the campaign about whether Trudeau would be as supportive of the Jewish community as former prime minister Stephen Harper had been, Cape said that that is not the case.

"I got every sense that there was complete willingness from the prime minister-designate to have that dialogue and to work as closely with our community as had been in the past." ■

Correction

The headline on the story about Holocaust Education Week co-chair Lily Kim incorrectly referred to her as a Catholic and a Korean. In fact, Kim was raised in a Protestant tradition and was born in Canada to Korean parents.
We apologize for the error.

Maharot say RCA motion won't change their roles

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Maharat Rachel Kohl Finegold

The two women who use the title "maharat" and serve Montreal's Orthodox Jewish community say the latest resolution by the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) reaffirming that women shouldn't be ordained as rabbis or maharot won't change what they do.

Maharat Rachel Kohl Finegold, who serves Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, and Maharat Abby Brown Scheier, who also serves the Montreal Jewish community as an educator, are two of the first three graduates of Yeshivat Maharat who inspired a similar statement from the RCA when they were ordained in 2013.

That motion followed one passed three years earlier by the RCA, the largest international organization of Orthodox rabbis, in response to the founding of the New York-based yeshiva, the first Orthodox rabbinical school for women.

The 2010 resolution said the school was "a violation of our *mesorah* (tradition)" and that the RCA "regrets that the leadership of the school has chosen a path that contradicts the norms of our community."

In 2013, when three women graduated from the program for the first time, the RCA reaffirmed its opposition to the idea of female Orthodox rabbis.

The most recent resolution, passed late last month, stated that "due to our aforesaid commitment to sacred continuity, we cannot accept either the ordination of women or the recognition of women as members of the Orthodox rabbinate, regardless of the title."

Maharat Scheier told *The CJN*, that despite the resolutions, she'll continue to serve her community.

"The community has responded so well and only encouraged what we've been doing. That's my experience. The resolution doesn't change anything for those who are out there and those who see the impact of what the women are [doing]," she said.

"The fact is that there are 22 women enrolled in the school at the moment, as well as 11 graduates… My position is that we've seen how in just the past three years, the response has been so positive in the community… we expect that this will be the case in the future as well."

Maharat Finegold said this latest resolution doesn't say anything different from the ones passed in 2010 and 2013, but it suggests the RCA is "uncomfortable with the growth of support [for maharot] and they're uncomfortable with the fact that these are women who are squarely within the Orthodox community. I grew up going to Orthodox day schools and Orthodox camps, and I very much consider myself an Orthodox woman."

In a poem she posted on her Facebook page, Maharat Finegold wrote, "I have answered the call to serve my people. To use my spiritual and intellectual energy to teach Torah and enliven the spirit of the Jewish nation. I have answered this call despite the questions, the hesitations, the ambiguities, the many distractions.

"I am here. Does that make you afraid? Does that make you wonder what I might do next? Does my presence threaten to topple the edifice of the *Mesorah*?… People often ask me, 'Why don't you just become a Conservative Rabbi? Wouldn't it be easier, simpler? No, it would not be easier to deny who I am, to refrain from speaking my truth, to ignore the path of my Torah, in order to make things simpler for all of us."

Rabbi Daniel Korobkin, spiritual leader of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto and the RCA's northeast vice-president, explained that the resolution was voted on by 900 members of the organization and it was a very close vote.

"The margin of difference was about 20 rabbis. It was pretty much divided. But not because there is a division of opinion about whether women should be ordained. There is general consensus that that is not part of the Orthodox tradition. The reason why there was a difference of opinion was that [some questioned whether] this was a productive resolution or not… We just view the resolution as a bit of a distraction," Rabbi Korobkin said.

"I acknowledge that within the Orthodox community, some of the most effective leaders within the Orthodox Jewish community are women – as teachers, as principals, as yoetzot halachah, as board members, as shul presidents and so forth. It is really only the issue of a formal rabbinic ordination that this resolution addresses."

Rabbi Korobkin said he would rather focus on where members of the Jewish community can find common ground and work together.

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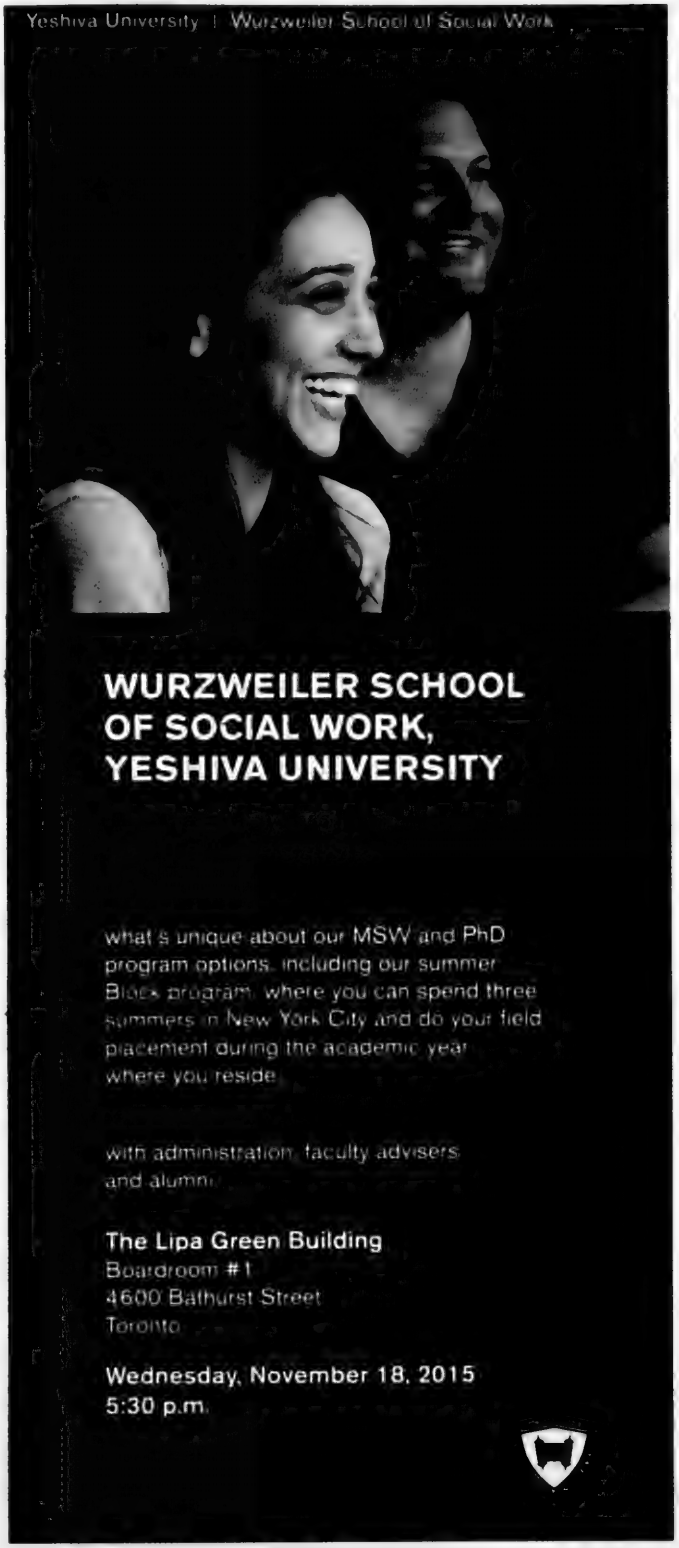
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Calls spike for Israel's emergency response network

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The violence in Israel has caused about a 10 per cent spike in the number of daily phone calls to United Hatzalah of Israel, a non-profit, civilian emergency medical response network, says Eli Beer, the organization's president and co-founder.

"Before, our volunteers got 700 calls or so a day, and now we're getting an extra 50 to 70 each day," Beer, a paramedic of over 26 years who co-created United Hatzalah in1989.

Beer was in Toronto last month and spoke at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation and Beth Torah Congregation and to private groups in the Jewish community about his experiences treating victims of terrorist attacks in Israel.

He told *The CJN* that a large number of the additional calls United Hatzalah is getting have to do with terror attacks such as stoned cars or stabbings, but many also come from people having panic attacks.

"We get calls from elderly people, some who are Holocaust survivors, in areas where there's a lot of terrorism, who need someone to help calm them down," he said.

United Hatzalah is Israel's largest independent, fully volunteer-run emergency medical services organization.

Its close to 3,000 volunteers have all undergone United Hatzalah's 200-hour medical training program.

It delivers free and immediate emergency medical services to those in need, regardless of race or religion and "everywhere in the country we can," Beer said.

"We have Jews and Arabs working together. We have volunteers that come from east Jerusalem and want to save lives."

United Hatzalah co-ordinates with the multitude of ambulance services – Beer said there are about 100 different ones in Israel, including national and local companies – and is notified any time there is an emergency call.

All its volunteers have a GPS app on their phones that within the first few seconds after a call comes in, sends an alert to anyone who happens to be in the immediate area of the emergency.

This allows them to get to the site within two to three minutes and to administer treatment to those in crisis before an ambulance arrives.

"The whole idea behind United Hatzalah is not to compete with the ambulance services, but complement them," Beer stressed.

The volunteers typically have day jobs, ranging "from doctors to fish vendors," Beer said, but if an emergency happens nearby, they're committed to dropping everything to assist or save a life.

Eli Beer UNITED HATZALAH PHOTO

Beer emphasized that some of the volunteers are Arab, Muslim and Christian.

United Hatzalah is funded by donors around the world, mostly from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, and the donations allow the organization to purchase what it calls "ambucycles" – medically equipped motorcycles – and other equipment. About 400 of the volunteers use ambucycles.

Beer said United Hatzalah volunteers focus on treating victims and never encounter dilemmas as to whether to administer medical treatment to terrorists. As civilian medical responders, they're not allowed to go near terrorists until the police have arrived and checked to ensure the former aren't hiding additional weapons.

"By the time [terrorists] are ready to be treated, the [actual] ambulances have shown up," Beer said.

Asked if he thought Israel was in the midst of a third intifadah, Beer, said: "I think it's stupid terrorism... Terrorism that comes from people who are uneducated, not sophisticated."

While Beer and friends started the organization in a religious area of Jerusalem, they decided "to go beyond our neighbourhood, because our goal is to go everywhere and have a very fast response. Today we have a lot of very Orthodox people who will drive [to sites of crisis] even on Shabbat to save lives, but almost half our volunteers are not religious, and about seven per cent aren't Jewish."

Saving lives takes precedence over other responsibilities in Judaism, he said, and United Hatzalah is working to expand internationally, including to countries such as Lithuania, Panama and Brazil.

"This [service] should be offered everywhere in the world, not just in Jewish communities," Beer said. ■

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Exhibit recalls South Africa's 'shtetl by the sea'

JODIE SHUPAC
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Dubbed by some "the shtetl by the sea," North American Jews might best understand Muizenberg, a beachside suburb of Cape Town once brimming with both Jewish residents and Jewish holiday-goers, as the Miami of South Africa.

Memories of Muizenberg, a South African exhibition featuring photographs and recollections from the post-World War II hub of Jewish life and culture, will be showcased Nov. 16 to 29 at Toronto's Schwartz/Reisman Centre, marking the show's 10th international appearance.

Most recently shown in various cities in Australia, the exhibit, curated by Johannseburg-based Joy Kropman, was brought to Toronto by Richard Stern, 78, a Torontonian who himself grew up along the beach in Muizenberg.

He said the exhibit features about 40 panels displaying memorabilia – mainly images and accompanying text – from what was considered a kind of golden age for Jews in Muizenberg, as well as more than 1,000 photographs submitted by Jews who had lived or vacationed in the town during its Jewish heyday, roughly between 1950 and 1965.

Stern, who moved to Canada in 1963, explained that in this period, anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 Jews would regularly travel to Muizenberg to escape the heat of the South African interior and relax by the sea during the country's summer months of December and January.

In addition, at the peak of the town's popularity among South African Jews, about 600 Jewish families made Muizenberg their permanent residence, and the town had both a synagogue and kosher hotels.

"That beach used to be absolutely packed during summer months. There were thousands of young people. The older people would sit by the seaside and the younger people would be by what was called the 'snake pit' – a protected area, a piece of sand with bathing boxes on one side and a pavilion on the other that people packed into from one corner to another," Stern recalled.

"Muizenberg was very much a part of people's lives growing up. Many Jews met their spouses there," he added.

After Stern's brother, who lives in Israel, made the opening speech for the exhibit's Tel Aviv stop, Stern said he inquired about

The beach in Muizenberg, with its Victorian bathing huts, was popular in the '50s and '60s.

bringing *Memories of Muizenberg* to Toronto, and he ultimately paid to ship the exhibit here.

"They were going to destroy it, because after Australia, no one else wanted to take the exhibit. I thought it would be a good community project, as so many South African Jews live here in Canada… It's a real walk down memory lane," he said.

He noted that many Jews hailing from Muizenberg became quite influential, starting large companies in South Africa.

"The whole of the beachfront was settled by mining magnates like the Oppenheimer family and the Schlesinger family. All the houses along the beachfront were designed by Sir Herbert Baker, an architect who designed houses of parliament in Pretoria," he said.

Stern's own grandfather, Max Sonnenberg, moved from Germany to Muizenberg and later became a member of parliament in South Africa during World War II.

Due to political upheaval in South Africa from the mid-1960s to the 1980s, the country's Jewish population dwindled substantially, and a large number of Jews who had either lived or vacationed in Muizenberg moved to Canada.

Stern, whose four grandparents hailed, respectively, from Germany, England and the United States before ending up in Muizenberg, said the exhibit's illustrative panels give viewers who are unfamiliar with the seaside town a real sense of what Jewish life was like there.

And for those who are actually from Muizenberg or who spent their summer vacations there, the exhibit will be an opportunity to reminisce and recognize people they once knew in the many photographs.

After Toronto, Stern said, the exhibit will head to Atlanta, and then, possibly, to Dallas. ■

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Waterloo student group presses for Israel boycott

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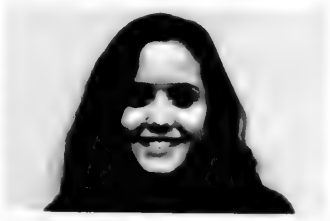

Alexa Fuentes Valdez

A student group at the University of Waterloo (UW) has submitted a petition to the school's Federation of Students – known as Feds – to push for a referendum on whether the school should sever academic ties with Israeli post-secondary institutions.

The petition, drafted by Ethical Collaboration UW, states that Palestinian students face systematic discrimination at the Israeli institutions that UW has academic partnerships with, including the University of Haifa, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Tel Aviv University, and the Weizmann Institute of Science.

On Oct. 8, the group handed over 4,000 signatures – which meets the minimum requirement of 10 per cent of undergraduate student signatures needed to trigger a referendum – to the student federation.

Feds, which represents UW undergraduates, is currently in the process of cross-referencing the signatures to ensure they're from Waterloo students. If the 4,000 signatures are verified, a referendum will be called.

But Judy Zelikovitz, vice-president of university and local partner services at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, said that even if a referendum is called and students vote in favour of boycotting Israeli academic institutions, the result will be non-binding and will likely not have any bearing on the university's decisions to partner with Israeli schools.

"We look at Waterloo, which has an excellent number of joint programs and partnerships with Israeli universities. We know that this is not led by one or two people, but by people at the very top. UW president Feridun Hamdullahpur has been instrumental in securing those partnerships and being on the ground in Israel with his team to make sure that's happening," Zelikovitz said.

"I presume that regardless of what a vote might determine, these relationships are going to remain in place and student resolutions or a referendum isn't going to impact that right now."

In a statement to *The CJN*, UW spokesperson Nick Manning said the administration is monitoring the situation and will respond accordingly.

"Waterloo proactively engages with international research-intensive universities that share our values of academic freedom, freedom of expression and equity," he said.

Although she's confident that a referendum won't affect UW's relationship with Israel, Zelikovitz said she was concerned the petition "was presented somewhat dishonestly in terms of the intent of what they were asking people to sign up for."

According to Alexa Fuentes Valdez, a second-year psychology student, when she and her friends were approached by an Ethical Collaboration representative to sign the petition last March, they were vaguely told the petition was in support of human rights.

After Valdez pressed the group's representative for more information, she told her that UW is collaborating with universities in Israel that were developing weapons to kill Palestinians.

Valdez said she doesn't have an issue with Ethical Collaboration's decision to advocate on behalf of Palestinians, but disagreed with their approach to pressure students by implying if they didn't sign it, they didn't support human rights.

"Originally, I was going to sign it because I didn't know what it was for. I was like, 'Of course I care about human rights.' But when I asked for more details they started talking about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict… Two of my friends signed it. They said, 'I didn't want to not sign it.' So there was some peer pressure because they worded it like it was about human rights. My friends want their signatures removed now."

Requests for an interview with an Ethical Collaboration representative went unanswered.

Marc Newburgh, CEO of Hillel Ontario, who has been working with UW students to respond to the petition, said, "There's a heightened conversation that didn't exist before. It's creating awareness in conversation with students and ensuring that students are aware of what they've signed on to and how this represents or doesn't represent Israel and what the ties are that the university has with Israel."

While Feds is currently working on verifying the signatures, CIJA and Hillel Ontario launched an email campaign to urge members of the pro-Israel community to send an email to Hamdullahpur to thank him for his commitment to working with Israeli institutions.

Zelikovitz said about 500 people took part in this initiative. ■

Synagogues mobilize to help Syrian refugees

PAUL LUNGEN
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Early in the summer, a reporter returned from Lebanon with news about a Kurdish family that had fled Syria and was living in a barn. They were working as field hands to earn their keep, but none of the three children attended school, conditions were miserable and their prospects were bleak.

It so happened that the congregation at Congregation Darchei Noam in Toronto was looking for a way to help Syrian refugees, and the Kurdish family fit the bill.

Darchei Noam was among the first Jewish groups to mobilize to sponsor a Syrian refugee family, and as a result, the process is pretty well advanced. All the documentation has been completed and sent to the processing office in Winnipeg. If approved, the family could be in Canada in a matter of months.

Though perhaps the earliest, Darchei Noam is certainly not the only Jewish group or congregation sponsoring Syrian refugees. Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) Toronto, which is a sponsorship agreement holder (SAH), counts at least 17 congregations, private groups and individuals who are at various stages of sponsoring refugees.

Sponsors are expected to raise $27,000 to maintain a family of four and $29,700 for a family of five. That doesn't include additional travel and medical costs, and other expenses needed to assist the refugee families through the first year or two after their arrival in Canada.

In addition to the families and individuals at Darchei Noam, the families and individuals of other congregations and groups operating under JIAS auspices include groups at Beth Tzedec Congregation, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am, BFG Group, City Shul, families and individuals at Holy Blossom Temple, First Narayever Congregation, Jewish Family Services of Ottawa, Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School (and friends), Scadding Court Community Centre, Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, Temple Kol Ami, Danforth Jewish Circle, and Ve'ahavta.

The response from the Jewish community has been extensive, particularly after a photo of drowned Syrian toddler Alan Kurdi was featured prominently in the international media, said Lia Kisel, language and settlement director at JIAS Toronto. The organization fielded hundreds of calls from people asking how they could help, and JIAS organized an information night attended by more than 100 people.

The people at Darchei Noam got started last May, and to date, they've raised "a good deal more than $29,500," said Suzanne Silk Klein, co-chair of the synagogue's refugee sponsorship program.

Syrians in the Suruc refugee camp in Turkey
SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO

They've exceeded that base amount to such an extent that "we're hoping we can deal with a second family," she said.

A number of synagogue members have volunteered to assist in the integration of the family once they arrive, helping provide medical and dental care, assistance in navigating the education system, help with shopping and other daily tasks, Silk Klein said.

Silk Klein acknowledged there were discussions at the shul over who should be sponsored, but "very few people said to me, 'Do we really want to sponsor X, Y and Z?' I said this is a humanitarian need. Nobody turned me down for money because they were a Muslim family."

All applicants will be "seriously vetted" and the family, when they heard they were being sponsored by a Jewish congregation in Toronto, said, "'I can't believe that people who don't know us, help us.'" Silk Klein said.

Concerns over the background of potential sponsored refugees were raised at Beth Tikvah, said Rabbi Jarrod Grover, who delivered a Rosh Hashanah sermon about the Jewish principle of helping the stranger in need.

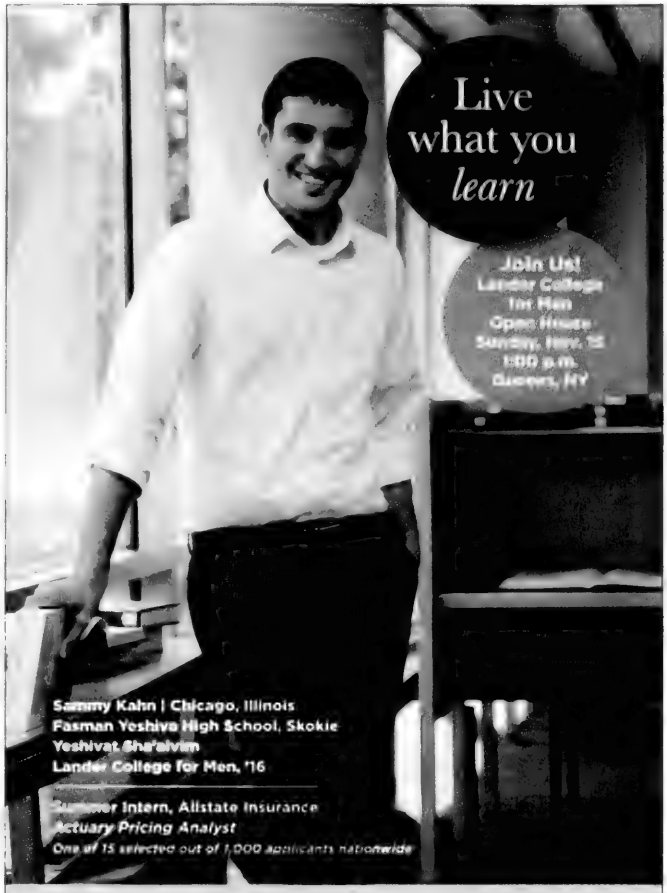
Rabbi Grover said he has been in contact with JIAS and hopes to piggy-back on the Darchei Noam effort by sponsoring a member of the Kurdish group's extended family to Canada.

"The fact it's Kurdish made it easier to raise the money," he said. "The Kurds are a persecuted minority. It's a different story. There is no history of Kurdish anti-Semitism or opposition to Israel."

So far the shul has raised close to $20,000.

"People can identify with this situation. It is part of our story, and as Jews, we have a responsibility to help," Rabbi Grover said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61



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Shul speakers examine Jewish-Muslim relations

PAUL LUNGEN
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"Are we allies or foes?" promotional material for a community event asks, referring to the relationship between Muslims and Jews.

As far as Azim Shamshiev is concerned, there are many similarities between Islam and Judaism. Both are monotheistic faiths with long, intertwined histories and a strong focus on community identity. "I can't think of any two religions so close to each other," he said.

However, Shamshiev, a Muslim who hails originally from Uzbekistan, acknowledged there is more to it than that. Despite the similarities, people of the two faiths are "disconnected from each other," suffer from mistrust and in some cases, even hatred, he said.

Today, Shamshiev resides in Toronto where he works as executive vice-president of the Intercultural Dialogue Institute of Toronto (IDI), GTA West, an organization formed in 2010 to promote social cohesion and foster respect among people of various backgrounds. He is also a participant in the Muslim Leadership Initiative (MLI), a program run at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem to foster greater understanding of Judaism and Israel among visiting Muslim leaders.

Shamshiev was joined by MLI program director Yossi Klein Halevi in addressing the relationship between Muslims and Jews, at a community event at the Beth Tzedec Synagogue attended by hundreds of people. The program was sponsored by the Shalom Hartman Institute and the IDI.

The critical thing for Muslim communities is to try to understand Jews "from their own perspective, their own frame of reference," Shamshiev said.

Klein Halevi, author of several books, including *Like Dreamers: The Story of the Israeli Paratroopers who Reunited Jerusalem and Divided a Nation*, said the MLI brings North American Muslims to Israel in a program of study. An important part of the program is exposing Muslims to the concept of Jewish peoplehood, something with which they are generally not familiar.

Jews see peoplehood as key to their identity, as well as their connection to the Land of Israel. Muslims don't. As a result, Muslims see Israel as an artificial creation, he suggested.

MLI does not focus on politics nor does it aim to convince Muslim leaders about this or that policy of the Israeli government. The goal is to create a basis of respectful conversation founded on "knowledge of who we are as a people," Klein Halevi said.

Azim Shamshiev, left, and Yossi Klein Halevi
PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

He said he hoped a Jewish Leadership Initiative might be implemented one day to expose Jews to the Muslim point of view.

In a question-and-answer segment, kicked off by Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, the panellists were asked to address Jews' fear of Muslims and Muslims fears of Jews.

Klein Halevi said Jews have a long, historical fear of those who wish to do them harm. He said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tapped into that in his recent reference to the Mufti of Jerusalem's alliance with Adolf Hitler. That "expresses a fear we have" of "facing genocidal threats coming from the Muslim world," he said.

Shamshiev said Muslim attitudes toward Jews are framed by two seminal events, its colonial past with the importation of anti-Jewish attitudes, and the current conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

He said Islam is tolerant, and he pointed to two of Muhammad's wives who were Jewish to illustrate the point. One converted to Islam, the other did not, yet she was accepted, he noted.

Asked to explain the concept of jihad, Shamshiev said in its most important manifestation – the "greater jihad" – it refers to fighting evil and striving for moral excellence.

A "lesser jihad" referred to a battle fought by Muhammad against idol worshippers, he said.

Asked to respond to Jews' concerns about anti-Semitism among Muslims, Klein Halevi said it is a fear he understands. But dialogue is something "we have to try."

He noted that Imam Abdullah Antepli knocked on his door on behalf of North American Muslims who were eager to start a dialogue. That led to creation of the MLI.

Imam Antepli considers himself a recovering anti-Semite who wants to create an indigenous North American brand of Islam while engaging seriously with the Jewish community, he said. ●

Film documents stories of Shoah child survivors

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Susan Pasternak was born in northeastern Poland in 1939, just month before the outbreak of World War II. The Germans forced her family to live in the ghetto of Zambrów, but arrangements were made for her and her mother to hide in the apartment of a Polish woman in the town. "My mother and I snuck out of the ghetto. We lived under a table with a heavy black cloth. That was home for my mother and me for 3-1/2 years."

Pasternak told her story in *Child Survivors – Then & Now: Understanding Our Childhood and its Impact on Our Lives*, a documentary film that debuted at Baycrest Health Sciences Centre on Nov. 3 during Holocaust Education Week. About 100 people attended the event, which included a discussion with the child Holocaust survivors following the screening.

Humber College film professor Eva Ziemsen and her students produced the film. It featured participants in a group for child Holocaust survivors co-facilitated by Baycrest social workers Peggy Solomon and Shoshana Yaakobi.

The group – it now has about a dozen members from diverse European backgrounds – is held bi-monthly and was started by Solomon back in 2003. The participants began as a group of strangers and grew to become friends, Solomon said. "They're a dynamic type of family."

In the film, the members spoke about surviving the war as children, and some of them also discussed their experiences as new immigrants in Canada.

When Pasternak disembarked at Pier 21 in Halifax in 1947, she was only eight years old. "I was the first immigrant child to arrive from Europe after the war."

But she came alone. Her mother suffered a fatal heart attack after the war ended in 1945. Pasternak was in a displaced persons camp until she was reunited with an aunt who'd immigrated to Canada before the war.

Faigie Libman was born into a prosperous family in Kaunas, Lithuania. She and her mother, the only survivors in their family, were able to stay together in concentration and labour camps, she recounted. "My mother registered me. Instead of saying I was 10, she said I was 12. She stuffed me in the right places. I remained in the concentration camp, and I was one of the best workers. I consider myself a miracle."

Anna Cheszes was born near Bialystok as Pola Kaplan around 1940. When she was a toddler, she was sent to live with a Jewish family that had fake Polish identity papers, as well as baptism papers for an Anna Strzelczyk. Cheszes took on that name.

Back row, from left, Faigie Libman and Susan Pasternak, and, bottom row, Anna Cheszes, left, and Yolanda Engel BARBARA SILVERSTEIN PHOTO

Beppie Erlich, who was originally from the Netherlands, was hidden under tiles when at age five and fed through a straw.

Gershon Williger, a participant in the group with wife Jane, is also from the Netherlands. His parents were killed at Stutthof in 1944. He said he found out he was Jewish after the war, when he was eight years old. In his youth, he became very connected to Israel through Habonim. "I fell in love with the State of Israel... I was eager to get out of Europe. Europe had robbed me of my family."

Harry Rozendaal, another survivor of Dutch origin, described the isolation he and his wife experienced when they immigrated to Canada and never really felt connected to a community in Montreal. He also spoke of the loneliness he now feels since the death of his wife of 58 years. "I'm still suffering. I miss her every day."

Etti Miller, who was born in the Vilna Ghetto in 1941, recalled the social challenges she faced when she first came to Toronto. "I didn't know the language. I had two long braids. I was chubby and I was picked on. Two or three kids would beat me up. It was scheduled every day."

The teachers overlooked the bullying, because she didn't have the language facility to tell them about the harassment, she said. "Life was a misery."

While things improved for her by Grade 7, as an only child, she was very aware of her parents' suffering. "I felt that I should not put more burden on my parents. They loved me, but they had their own *tzuris*."

They'd been Polish partisans. Her father, a wealthy, educated man, had a lot of prestige in Europe, she said. "After the war, my parents were broken. They lived in their own shadow. As I got older, I realized: thank God I survived the war, as opposed to other kids who didn't. I have to make the best of it."

Other participants in the child survivors group include Rose Factor, Hans Sanders, Yolanda Engels, Marika Freeman, Filo Caresses and Nina Oval. ■

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Doctor discusses Shoah's legacy for medical ethics

FRANCES KRAFT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It's inconceivable to think that physicians could transform from healers into killers, said Dr. Raul Artal at a Holocaust Education Week event geared mainly for medical professionals.

But, he noted, German doctors and other medical personnel took part in large-scale concentration camp experiments concerning malnutrition, and the infection of man-made wounds to test antibiotics, among other topics of investigation.

As well, he said, during World War II, more than six million Jews were selected and killed; 400,000 German patients were selected and sterilized; 5,000 German children selected and euthanized; and 200,000 German adults selected and euthanized. Only 15 per cent of patients in German mental hospitals at the start of the war survived. Thousands of German doctors were involved, Artal said.

The California-based professor and chairman emeritus of Saint Louis University's department of obstetrics, gynecology and women's health, spoke Nov. 4 about Medical Ethics and the Holocaust: A Legacy for Today, at Mount Sinai Hospital, as part of Toronto's 35th annual Holocaust Education Week.

Artal, who is a champion of Houston's Center of Medicine After the Holocaust, teaching internationally about medical ethics lessons from the Holocaust, also spoke the preceding night at Reena in a more personal vein.

At Mount Sinai, he also touched on his own experience when he spoke briefly about his birth in 1943 in Bersad, a German Romanian concentration camp in Transnistria.

Artal noted that he was born with what would later be described as an extremely low Apgar score. "Don't predict anything based on Apgar scores," he cautioned.

He also said he was lucky not to be born in a camp like Auschwitz, where babies with Aryan features were given up for adoption, and those with non-Aryan features were sent to the gas chambers.

Addressing directly the relevance of his lecture topic, Artal asked, "What is the lesson today, when technology exists to modify genes and create 'perfect' babies?"

He believes that genome technology "should be used only for modifying genes that lead to disease, not to attain better babies," he said.

Biomedical ethics have evolved over time, and will continue to be an essential component of medical education, he added. Future issues will depend on medical advances in technology and other factors including disease knowledge, the national health care delivery system, and "our collective conscience."

Dr. Raul Artal
DANNY SANTA ANA, MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL PHOTO

Medical ethics is not a list of rules, Artal said, but rather "a matter of continual thought and evolution."

Current principles include respecting patient autonomy, promoting the well-being of patients, and causing no harm or injury, Artal said.

He explained that medical ethics was consistent until the mid- to late 1800s, when Charles Darwin proposed the idea of natural selection, Darwin's cousin Francis Galton coined the term "eugenics," and Friedrich Nietzsche said that God is dead, and that "the sick man is a parasite of society."

During the Third Reich, Artal said, there was a slippery slope that started with 1933 laws permitting involuntary sterilization of people with conditions ranging from blindness or deafness to schizophrenia, and those from "undesired races." Eventually, this led to the Final Solution, and later to a coverup of what happened, Artal added.

Of 23 medical doctors tried at Nuremberg following the war, seven were acquitted, seven received death sentences, and the remainder received prison sentences ranging from 10 years to life.

The 10-point Nuremberg code developed at the trial deals with medical research, and states, among other things, that voluntary consent of the human subject is essential. As well, Artal added, the subject should be at liberty to bring the experiment to an end, and experiments should avoid all unnecessary physical and mental suffering. ■

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Revenge called central to Soviet Holocaust narrative

JODIE SHUPAC
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The western Holocaust narrative tends to be one of victimhood and "never again," while the Soviet narrative tends to be about revenge.

That was the central point stressed at a panel discussion Nov. 2 at the University of Toronto as part of Holocaust Education Week.

Titled "The Red Army and the End of the Holocaust," the event was the Annual Wolfe Lecture on the Holocaust, presented by the Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Chair in Holocaust Studies, the Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, U of T's faculty of arts and science, and the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies at U of T.

The panel, attended by about 100 people, was moderated by Doris Bergen, the Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Professor of Holocaust Studies at U of T and comprised Anna Shternshis, acting director of the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies and an associate professor of Yiddish at U of T, and Zvi Gitelman, a professor of Judaic studies at the University of Michigan.

Anna Shternshis, left, and Zvi Gitelman
JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

The conversation was framed by Bergen's explanation that although the Soviet military is known for liberating Auschwitz and other concentration camps, the concept of the Soviets as liberators has been somewhat underplayed.

"This has to do with the multiple and sometimes contradictory roles played by the Red Army and the Soviet Union during the Holocaust," she said, explaining that the Soviet Union went from being "the ideological foe of Nazi Germany" to, after 1939, Germany's partner in dividing Poland and destroying large parts of eastern Europe.

The Soviet Union was both the site of mass killings of Jews and, in Siberia and parts of the interior, a refuge for at least half a million Jews during World War II.

Shternshis and Gitelman both shed light on the responses of Jewish and non-Jewish Red Army soldiers as they came upon the horrors of the Holocaust from 1943 onward, emphasizing that desire for revenge was extremely evident.

Shternshis, who has studied oral histories, literary texts and personal sources such as diaries and written correspondences between Red Army soldiers and relatives while serving, said that every former Jewish Red Army soldier she interviewed "talked about the importance of executing personal revenge for what happened to their families. I heard so many quotes like, 'The Germans killed all my family, I'll kill even more of their family… I saw letters where a wife wrote in Yiddish to her husband in the Red Army to 'Kill [Germans] and show no mercy.'"

She referred to works of Soviet poetry written during the period – both in Russian and in Yiddish – that she said show, "an aggressive call for revenge… and [are] all about the physical extermination of the Germans."

Gitelman, who has studied sources such as military-commissioned reports and Soviet and Yiddish press materials from the period, noted that among World War II's many "dirty little secrets" were the unofficial acts of revenge by Red Army soldiers – Jewish and non-Jewish. For instance, the mass rape of German women, of which Soviet soldiers in particular were guilty, was a form of "retaliatory humiliation."

Shternshis said the average Red Army soldier encountered the Holocaust by directly witnessing sites of carnage – such as the mass graves they came across as they advanced eastward in 1943 – and by reading about it in the press or hearing of atrocities from family members' letters.

From hundreds of interviews she conducted with Jewish Red Army veterans, Shternshis learned that many Jewish soldiers and officers who helped liberate Ukraine asked, "Where are all the Jews? Where are my relatives?" By 1943, she said, Jews in the army who had thought of themselves as more Russian than Jewish had seen the extermination of their people and this marked "the watershed line… where many started switching to thinking of themselves as Jews." ■

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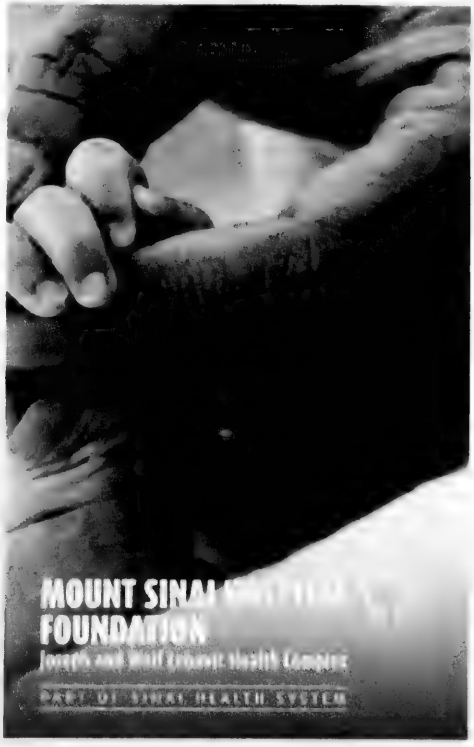


THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

Survivor tells Haligonians he 'could only hang onto hope'

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT, HALIFAX

Nate Leipciger has this audience in the palms of his hands.

It's evident the 87-year-old Holocaust survivor has told his story many times before, as he walks leisurely in front of more than 200 people assembled for the opening event of Holocaust Education Week in Halifax.

He speaks emotionally, carefully and in fluent clear English about his experience as a young Polish teen living through almost two years of horror under the Nazis during World War II.

"You could only hang onto hope," he said to a Nov. 1 audience of Jews and non-Jews. "It was the only survival mechanism."

He stressed the importance of telling his story, which he has done in book form. *The Weight of Freedom* is a 280-page tome, one of 62 in the Azrieli Series of Holocaust Memoirs of Canadian survivors.

"It's important to tell the story. There are six million stories and we [the survivors] have to talk for them," he said.

Leipciger – who was in Halifax with his wife, three daughters, their spouses and two of his nine grandchildren – headlined a week of education that drew large numbers to two films, a French presentation, and a talk by guest lecturer Rabbi Claudio Kasier-Blueth, retired from a pulpit in Victoria B.C., discussing reconciliation between church and synagogue.

The week concluded Nov. 8 with a commemoration of Kristallnacht, when Holocaust survivor Sidney Zoltak of Montreal, a Polish boy saved by Christians in his hometown, was guest speaker.

In his Nov. 1 talk, Leipciger told how, as a 15-year-old in 1943, he was taken with his family from their quiet home in Chorzow, Poland, put on a cattle car and delivered "to the middle of nowhere. I was tattooed [No. 133628], which meant I was going to a concentration camp. Those not tattooed were taken to the gas chambers at once."

He and his father were spared. His mother and sister were taken away and never seen by Leipciger and his father again. Leipciger said he survived in Auschwitz and other camps until January 1945, when his camp was evacuated so its prisoners could go on a five-day, 140-km death march, with only a half a loaf of bread and no water. Many died en route.

By April, he said to his father, who had miraculously survived with him, "I can't go on. I'd rather be shot right now than die at the roadside." His father urged him forward. "You can't give up hope now," he said. Within three days, the Americans liberated them, "and we had a restoration of life."

Nathan Leipciger JOEL JACOBSON PHOTO

He eventually arrived in Canada, with his father and completed high school, learning English, with difficulty, so he could find a trade. He worked part-time jobs and graduated from the University of Toronto with an engineering degree.

After working for others, he and two partners started a firm that became very successful. Today, he's retired, but his daughter, Lisa Pinkus, runs the firm, now a division of SNC Lavalin.

Leipciger is an annual leader of March of the Living tours and speaks often to schools and other groups about his Holocaust experiences. He and wife, Bernice, have been married for 61 years. "When he first told me his story, I didn't believe him," said Bernice, who was 17 at the time. "He suggested I read books he recommended to me, and I did. I understood very quickly."

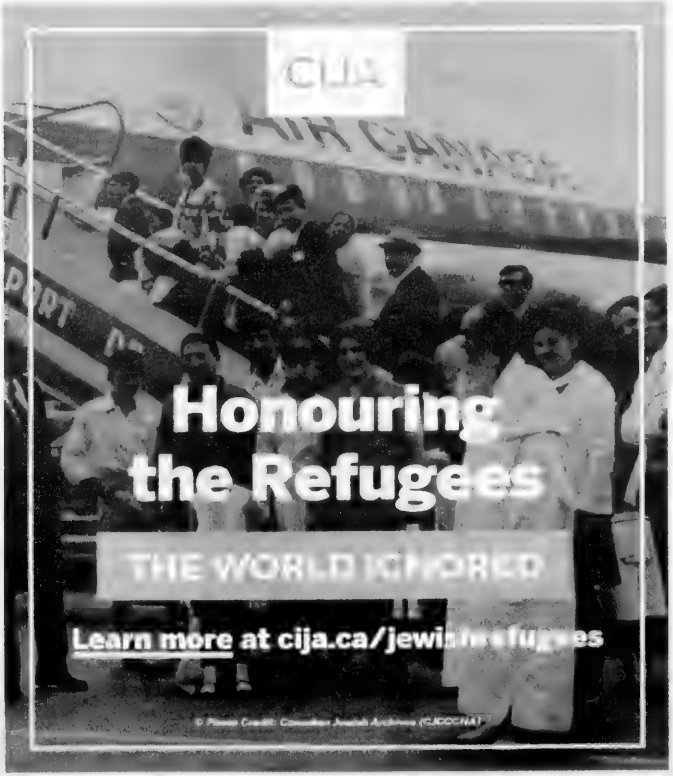
She says Nate would have nightmares, "but he wanted the world to know. It's his mandate. He feels he has to do this."

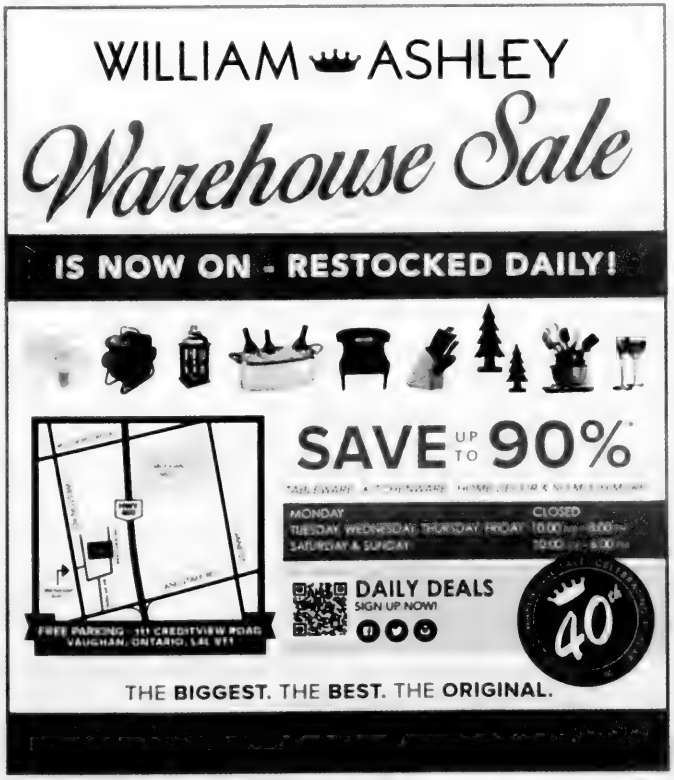
Zoltak, 83, came through Pier 21 in Halifax to Montreal in May 1948 and became a successful insurance broker. He spoke of his return to Poland in 1997 to thank the Catholic family who saved him and his family.

He wanted to present them with a Righteous Among Nations medal for protecting Jews during the war, but they refused, still afraid of anti-Semitic reprisals all those years later.

"Finally in 2011, they accepted it, but only before a very small gathering at the Israeli Embassy in Poland," he said.

He said the world has learned little in the last 80 years. Governments don't speak loudly enough, and children must be taught, by their parents that hate is never right and love is never wrong. ■

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Church hosts Shoah survivors for *Nostra Aetate* event

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

When a west Winnipeg Catholic church held a panel discussion last month featuring four Jewish Holocaust survivors speaking about their suffering, close to 300 Catholics listened with rapt attention.

The fact this kind of event could take place at all – and that it's not seen as anything unusual – is a testament to the revolution in Catholic-Jewish relations brought about by *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time), the encyclical introduced by Pope John XXIII that was subsequently ratified by the Second Vatican Council and promulgated by his successor, Pope Paul VI, on Oct. 28, 1965.

The Oct. 21 program was one of a series hosted by Mary, Mother of the Church to commemorate the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*.

"Father Kevin Bettens [the church's spiritual leader] and I became aware of the 50th anniversary and felt that our church should do something to commemorate the event," said parishioner Greg Barrett, who moderated the evening. "We approached Rabbi Allan Green of Congregation Shaarey Zedek to ask for his support and also spoke with other Christian denominations."

From left, front, are Holocaust survivors Walter Saltzberg, Morris Faintuch, and Stefan Carter. At rear are Greg Barrett and survivor Barbara Goszer. MYRON LOVE PHOTO

In his opening remarks, Barrett spoke of the importance of *Nostra Aetate* in promoting dialogue, understanding and reconciliation between Jews and Catholics, a policy that, he noted, Pope Francis fully endorses.

He described *Nostra Aetate* as "a call to love" and spoke of anti-Semitism as the "longest hatred."

"For 1,600 years, Catholics were taught contempt for Jews," he said. "That teaching prepared the ground for the Holocaust and the murder of six million Jews."

Stefan Carter, Morris Faintuch, Barbara Goszer and Walter Saltzberg were Jewish children living in Poland in 1939 when the Nazis invaded. They each in turn described their struggle to survive.

Saltzberg and Carter were born in Warsaw. Carter was from an assimilated, well-to-do Jewish family who spoke Polish in the home. He spoke about moving into the ghetto and its horrendous conditions, as well as efforts by Jews to carry on a semi-normal life with secret schools, underground newspapers, theatre and concerts.

He was able to leave thanks to a bribe paid to a guard. He had cousins on the outside – one married to a Polish woman – who hid him in their apartment for the duration of the war.

Saltzberg recounted that he had been on his own from age 10. For three years, a Christian doctor sheltered him. In the waning years of the war, a young Jewish man took care of him.

Saltzberg's luck almost ran out when the apartment he was hiding in was hit by a bomb. He was trapped in rubble up to his neck and suffered a broken leg. A friend pulled him out, but he couldn't get treatment for his leg. Combined with later having to hide in an underground bunker for five months with little room to move, Saltzberg was left with one leg shorter than the other.

Morris Faintuch was from Lodz and was 10 when the war began. After his parents were killed, he and an older brother struggled to survive. Faintuch left the ghetto and lived as best he could outside. In March 1944, he was captured and sent to Auschwitz. He raised his sleeve to show his number on his arm, noting that it became his name.

Barbara Goszer, from Lvov, was nine when her parents managed to smuggle her out of the ghetto and place her with a Christian family. After a while, the family moved with her to a small town where she went to school and attended church regularly with the family.

"I could have become Catholic after the war," she said. "I became very close with my adopted family. But I felt it was important to remain Jewish and serve as a witness to the Holocaust."

Goszer, Carter and Saltzberg came directly to Winnipeg in the late 1940s as war orphans, while Faintuch arrived in 1953 after living in Israel for a few years. He had grandparents and an older brother here who had come before the war.

The *Nostra Aetate* commemorations actually began a week earlier with a presentation on anti-Semitism by Father Sam Argenziano of Holy Rosary Church in Winnipeg. The final program in the series was Oct. 28 and featured Rabbi Green speaking about Judaism. ■

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He's out of politics, but Baird still supports Israel

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

The fact he's left federal politics won't stop him from being a strong advocate for Israel, former foreign affairs minister John Baird stressed to an audience of about 150 people at a gala held Nov. 7 in support of Canadian Hadassah-Wizo (CHW).

Baird and retired Col. Natan Barak, founder and CEO of mPrest Systems and leader of Israel's Iron Dome Command and Control System Development, were the keynote speakers at the "I love Israel" gala, held at the Eaton Chelsea Hotel.

Barak spoke first, delivering a presentation on the different types of rocket threats Israel faces and way the Iron Dome works to protect Israelis.

Baird then listed the "few people, or perhaps more than a few people," who he said were happy to see him leave foreign affairs, including "the foreign policy elites in Ottawa, the gang at CBC, the go-along-to-get-along types at the United Nations, and those who long for the return of that mushy phrase, 'Canada as an honest broker.'" But he emphasized that he'll continue to be vocal in his support for the Jewish People and Israel.

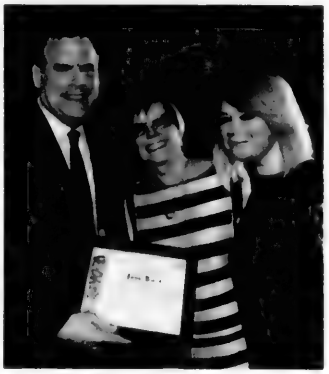
"I will continue to be an outspoken advocate for the truth, for the only liberal democracy in the Middle East, for the Jewish state," he said, drawing applause.

In addition to expressing admiration for the Jewish People for "accomplishing what they have on such a small strip of land in a really tough neighbourhood," and for Israel as the most economically prosperous country in the Middle East and "a beacon of light in a part of the world where all too often darkness prevails," Baird said it was one of the greatest privileges of his life to work to strengthen the bonds of friendship between Canada and Israel.

He traced his commitment to Israel back to 1993, when he was in his 20s and spent four months working for a cabinet minister in the ministry of foreign affairs during the brief government of prime minister Kim Campbell.

He described being at a briefing about rockets falling on Metula and asking a public servant what Canada would do about it, such as issue a statement, bring it up at the UN or talk to its allies. Baird said the bureaucrat said something he'd never forget: that Canada "[doesn't] get involved in things like this, because it's hard to tell the white hats from the black hats."

Baird detailed his reaction: "I drew a picture of a white hat and a black hat. Under the white hat, I put Israel. Under the black hat, I put Hezbollah. Under the white, I put liberal democracy, and under the black, I put terrorist organization. Under the white, I put our friend, and under the black, I put our enemy." He added, "Ladies and gentlemen, it couldn't be any more black and white than that."



From left, John Baird, CHW president Claudia Goldman and CHW executive director Alina Ianson. HELEN GAIDATSIS PHOTO

He said he decided right then that if he were ever in a position to change Canada's approach, he'd do so.

When he became foreign affairs minister, he instructed his officials to change every vote Canada had previously made in support of anti-Israel resolutions at the UN General Assembly, so that Canada was no longer "joining the pile-on and singling out Israel for condemnation each and every year."

His officials warned that "all hell would break loose" and that Canada would face an immediate trade boycott by the Arab world. But Baird said Canada went ahead and changed its votes and didn't get a single question about it in the House of Commons, nor did his press secretary receive a single call from the parliamentary press gallery, nor did then-Palestinian Authority prime minister, Salam Fayyad raise the issue with Baird when the two met.

Baird said that too often, Israel and the Jewish People are on the frontlines in fighting terrorism, confronting groups such as Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Canada needs to stand with them. "We call out those who excuse [terrorism] or perversely seek to justify it under the guise of moral relativism," he said.

Baird concluded by stressing that Israel has no greater friend than Canada and that by "working together, I know we can make this relationship even stronger in the weeks, months and years ahead." ■

Lawyer teaches natives how to reclaim looted art

LILA SARICK
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The lessons the Jewish community has learned in reclaiming priceless art that was looted by the Nazis are being passed on to another group of people seeking to reclaim stolen sacred goods: Ontario's First Nations.

At a Nov. 4 conference organized by the Chiefs of Ontario on protecting and repatriating sacred sites and items, the lawyer – whose California firm has reclaimed several works of Nazi-looted art, including the paintings featured in the recent movie *Woman in Gold* – described his most significant victories and some cases that are still tied up in litigation.

Addressing the conference, which included archeologists, curators and lawyers as well as community members, Donald Burris outlined the similarities in their situations.

"Just as the speakers have been highlighting the issue of cultural repatriation and reconciliation, that is similar to what we work with. We're dealing with families that have lost many relatives, who've had to rebuild lives and in some ways have had to get back a vestige of what they've lost," he said. "In the American experience, we didn't have respect for our own First Nations. In the Jewish experience [the Holocaust]... this was an absolute policy to destroy, destroy the culture of the Jewish People."

Burris described his firm's successful, but protracted fight in the *Woman in Gold* case, which included an appeal before the U.S. Supreme Court to reclaim five paintings by Gustav Klimt that were being held in the Austrian national art gallery.

In another instance, he described how his case was helped when a district attorney also filed suit for a stolen painting. The attorney, a Japanese-American who had been interned during World War II, said he became involved in the case to uphold a promise to his parents to fight injustices related to the era, Burris said.

Burris, who usually speaks to Jewish groups and was in Toronto last month to speak at a fundraiser for ORT Toronto, said in an interview that he hoped to leave the aboriginal group with a message that perseverance, creativity and some luck can lead to a successful resolution.

"Maybe they were a little down... I was hoping they would hear some of the positive stories and they could be applied to the issues they have to deal with," he said after his presentation.

First Nations, in fact, have run into many of the same obstacles regarding jurisdiction and repatriation that Burris has encountered, said Rose Miller, archeological supervisor monitor for the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ont.

Don Burris

> *All of the fights he has with museums and galleries we have the same fights*
>
> **Rose Miller, Archeological Supervisor Monitor For The Six Nations Reserve**

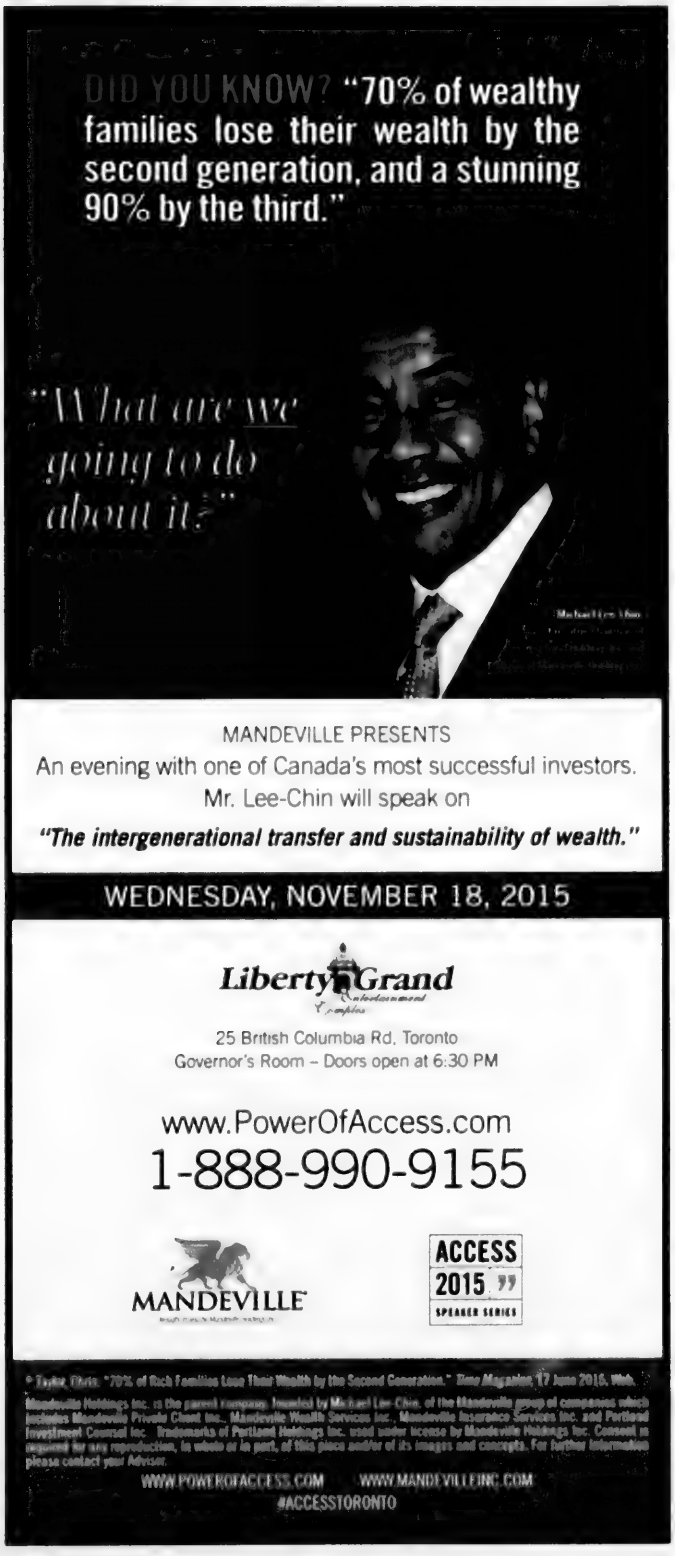
"All of the fights he has – with museums and galleries – we have the same fights," she said in an interview. "Museums say you have to prove it is ours. The onus is always on us to prove it is ours."

While her community has primarily focused on reclaiming the remains of ancestors, they are as valuable as stolen art to her community.

"When he [Burris] talks about how hard it is on the Jewish families, it is no different than when we fight to get sacred artifacts back," she said.

Adam Kahgee, justice director for the Chiefs of Ontario, a political organization that represents 133 First Nations communities in the province, and one of the organizers of the three-day conference said First Nations' efforts to protect sacred sites and reclaim stolen items are a way to heal their communities.

"You can see the parallel with what Don [Burris] was taking about, the role of getting back art that was taken from the Jewish People... and how that makes them whole and gives them back part of their culture," he said. "There's some really interesting parallels between the genocide of Jewish people during World War II and the colonial genocidal practices of Britain and Canada to First Nations and indigenous peoples." ■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Advertising Feature

'Free Jewish Learning Program at the Heart of Synagogue's Plans

Instilling a Jewish Identity, One Child at a Time

Shaar Shalom Synagogue recently launched an innovative Jewish Learning Program for children aged five to Bat/Bar Mitzvah to address the fact that 50% of Jewish children in the GTA do not receive any formal Jewish education

"Too many kids in the GTA... receive no Jewish education at all, and while day schools are an excellent option, the costs are higher than many families can afford. We designed this program to simply be one of the benefits we offer our members, with tuition at zero cost. We want our families to enjoy an innovative learning program for their kids at no additional cost aside from a very modest materials fee," said Shaar Shalom's rabbi, Steven Schwarzman

The program is called ***ATID***, which is the Hebrew word for *Future* The focus of Atid's curriculum is Hebrew, prayer, Jewish holidays, songs and dances and more

Bettina Schwarzman, the director, has more than 20 years of teaching experience. Bettina balances learning with fun and movement in an after school setting

"I like going to Atid. I get "alone time" with Bettina to work on Hebrew letters and words. I have so much fun. My grandfather came to pick me up at 6 and I asked him to come back in an hour!", said Daniella Hartman, aged 7

Atid's one-on-one approach helps children learn at their own pace and get individualized attention.

Shaar Shalom Synagogue offers this free program exclusively to members, making this an attractive benefit of membership This membership allows children to attend from one to four days per week, with flexibility to plan around current after school activities. Membership also includes High Holiday seats. Additionally, it reduces or elimates fees for many events held in the synagogue

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Israeli cancer fund marks 40 years of saving lives

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Andrew Faas, an ICRF donor and cancer survivor, stands at the ICRF donor recognition wall in Tel Aviv during a recent trip to Israel that celebrated the organization's 40th anniversary.

Israel Cancer Research Fund supporters, volunteers and donors are celebrating 40 years since the non-profit organization began raising money to promote life-saving cancer research.

About 25 people from ICRF's eight chapters throughout North America and Israel got together in Israel in October to visit some of the 90 scientists working at major Israeli universities and hospitals that ICRF funds to work towards cures for various cancers.

Since 1975, ICRF has granted about $53 million (US) to Israeli cancer research scientists, which has resulted in cancer-fighting drugs, including Gleevec, a drug that treats chronic myelogynous leukemia, and Doxil, a drug that fights ovarian, breast and AIDS-related cancers.

Andrew Faas, an ICRF donor and a cancer survivor who joined the delegation to Israel last month – during which the group visited Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Weizmann Institute of Science, Tel Aviv University and Ben Gurion University, and were treated to a gala hosted by ICRF's Jerusalem chapter chair Tamir Gilat, who is a cancer survivor and former goalie for the Maccabi Tel Aviv soccer team – wrote a blog post that highlighted the need for an organization like ICRF.

"Unfortunately, now as in 1975 when ICRF was formed, governments and big Pharma (the pharmaceutical industry) provide little investment in basic research," Faas wrote.

"Were it not for Israeli scientists funded by the ICRF, I would be dead today. Just over a decade ago I was diagnosed with leukemia and given, at most, six years to live. Thankfully I was prescribed a drug, Gleevec, which turned my fatal condition into a chronic one. ICRF funded the research, which led to the development of this miracle drug, which targets the harmful cells without affecting the healthy ones."

He said in the years since his diagnosis, the Faas Foundation has supported ICRF for more than just personal reasons.

"It is our passion for basic research that has been the major factor. Without basic research there would be no discovery, and without funding there would be no basic research, which would restrain the development of better treatments and ultimately a cure."

Jo Wagner Arbus, the executive director of ICRF in Toronto explained that the basic research that is being done is focused on "cellular division and why a cell starts off as being non-cancerous and high functioning in a person's body and how it changes to become cancer."

Brad Goldhar ICRF's international president added that ICRF-funded scientists are changing the landscape of cancer treatment around the world.

"The big buzzword these days is personalized medicine, which means two people that walk into a hospital with the same disease – let's say it's breast cancer or lung cancer – may have different personal genetic makeup. Therefore the treatment of their disease has to be different. There is a lot of focus on how to get to the point where you can basically figure out the genetic makeup of the individual, and then come up with the right cocktail, a combination of medicine that will be beneficial," Goldhar said.

He said that although the research is happening in Israel, the impact is global.

"If you ask a doctor working at a major cancer clinic anywhere in the world, 'Are you using Israeli science in your clinic?' no matter where they are in the world, the answer would be yes. So whether it's that drug, or others, or other types of therapies, there is Israeli science everywhere," he said.

One of the most exciting developments for ICRF in its 40th year, is that, for the first time, the organization is funding collaborative research between Israeli and North American researchers.

"There are three projects that are being funded. One is with a scientist working at Toronto General Hospital in partnership with scientists at Bar Ilan University. There was some pretty serious competition to get that funding and of the various projects that were reviewed, a scientist at Toronto General Hospital was one of the recipients," Goldhar said. ■

For more information, visit www.icrf.ca.

Toronto visitors impressed by human rights museum

TanenbaumCHAT students, from left, Cedric Attias, Hallie Rodney, Kayla Saul, Jason Arbour, along with principal Renee Cohen, centre, pose during a visit to Gray Academy. MYRON LOVE PHOTO

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

With the inaugural visit Oct. 25-28 by 100 Grade 10 students from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the Winnipeg-based Asper Foundation has taken its first step toward fulfilling one of the central goals of the late Israel Asper when he conceived of a human rights museum in Winnipeg more than 15 years ago.

"Since 1997, the Asper Foundation has paid to send more than 14,000 students from over 200 schools across Canada to the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington. Now we are going to be bringing those students to Winnipeg instead," said Jeff Morry, senior programmer for the foundation.

This first visit by the students from TanenbaumCHAT's north campus was a pilot project, Morry said.

"We will take some time now to determine how we proceed based on the feedback from this group. Then, in the spring, we plan to start bringing about 1,000 students a year from across Canada to Winnipeg to experience the museum [which has been open for just over a year]. We want to educate and inspire young people."

For the TanenbaumCHAT students, the visit to the museum and presentations from French-born Holocaust survivors (and sisters) Rochelle Fink and Regine Frankel, Yazidi community leader Nafiya Naso, and two refugees from Sierra Leone were eye-opening.

"I never realized before how many other peoples [in addition to Jews] were murdered in the Holocaust," said student Hallie Rodney. "The museum gave me a new understanding of the importance of the Holocaust."

Cedric Attias said it's important for young people to learn the stories the museum is presenting so they can try to prevent future genocides. "I was impressed by the sheer size of the building," he said. "It's largely interactive, which helps in connecting with our generation, who are so into technology."

Kayla Saul was impressed by the museum's architectural design. "It's amazing how you go from light to darkness," she said. "The design was obviously well thought out to create the greatest impact. It makes you appreciate the freedoms we have in Canada."

One of the most important goals of the museum is to encourage visitors to action. Kayla said the trip would spur her to help raise money for refugees, while Cedric said he went home with greater sympathy for people struggling for freedom. "I hope to come back here some time," he said.

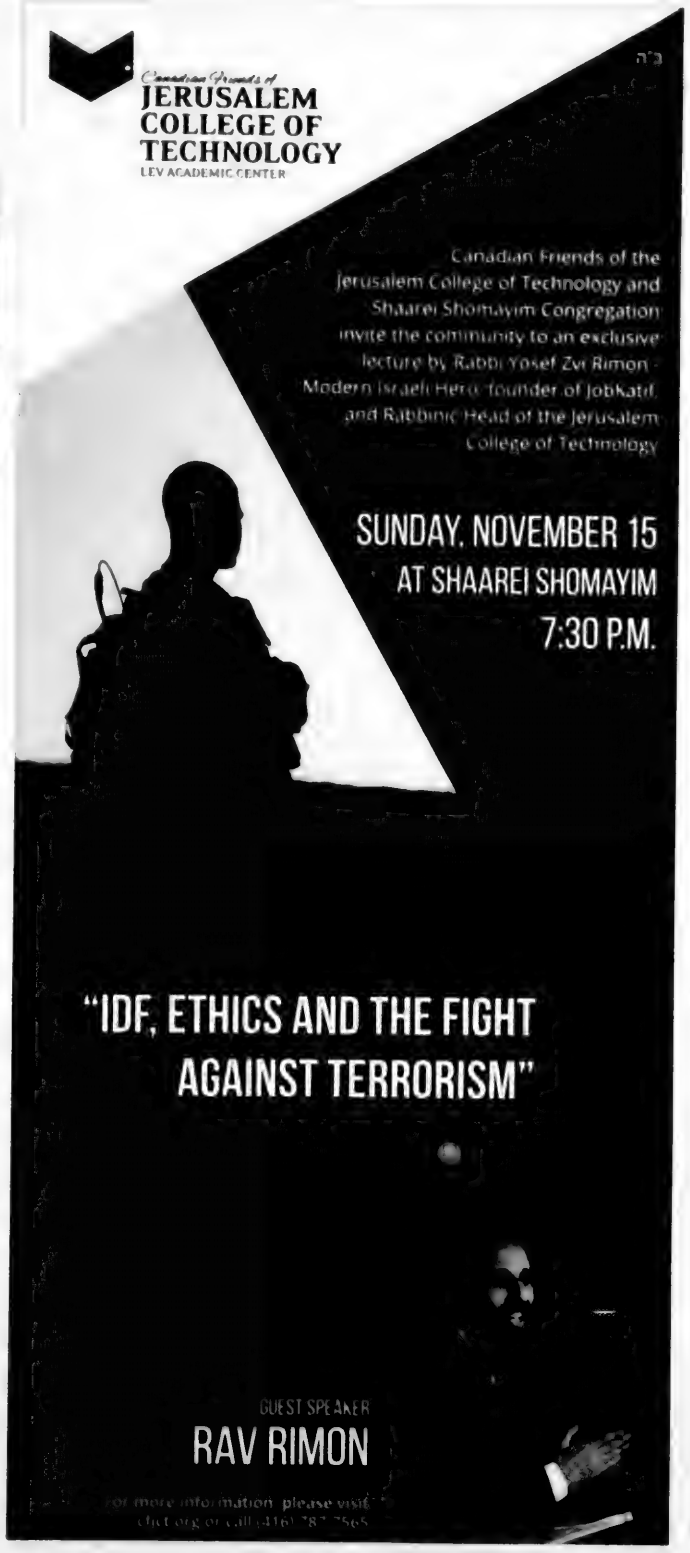
The student's trip also included tours of the Manitoba Museum (formerly the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature), the Manitoba legislature, the new polar bear exhibit at the Winnipeg Zoo, and the Asper Campus and Gray Academy of Jewish Education.

A couple of weeks before the TanenbaumCHAT students came, nine members of Toronto's Temple Emanu-El also travelled to Winnipeg to tour the museum.

Like the high schoolers, they were quite impressed with the museum. For Holocaust survivor Judy Weissenberg Cohen, the visit had special meaning, because she was able to see and listen to her own testimony for the first time.

"It was a very moving moment, particularly for our young tour guide," she said. "He said that that was the first time he had ever met someone whose words were part of the exhibit."

While in Winnipeg, the temple members were hosted by Temple Shalom, Winnipeg's Reform congregation, with whom they shared Friday night supper and attended services. The visitors also enjoyed a jazz concert at Temple Shalom, and on Sunday morning before their departure were provided with an overview of Winnipeg Jewish history by life-long Winnipegger David Cohen. ■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"WE BECOME WHAT WE BEHOLD"

Family Matters

by

John Syrtash
B. A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 33 years

Question: Regarding custody: My daughter deals with her mother's emotional nonsense much too frequently for an eleven-year-old girl. I'm not sure its normal for a mother/ex-wife to bad mouth and trash-talk her ex-husband. My daughter wants nothing more than to live with us. Is there an age when a child can decide on their own?

Answer: No, there is no such age. Nonetheless, by age 16, if a teenager moves with her feet, no court is going to stop her. No statute or court has ever drawn a line in the sand because with children, everything depends upon individual facts and their best interests. And a child's best interest first depends upon who's telling the story and upon who's listening. Even if one parent indicates where the child says she "wants" to live, a judge might well suspect the child is saying the exact same thing to the other parent. Why would a child do that? First, the child may not wish to hurt the other parent's feelings. Secondly, a child may well want to manipulate the situation. It's not unusual for a child to "play" one parent off the other.

What one child then "says" and another parent actually "hears" can cause tremendous pain to both. For this wise reason, a child's age is not the only legal test because the true wishes of a child may not be the best criteria, especially when the child doesn't want to be asked or might be planning meticulously for a PlayStation 3. And if the 12-year-old child is immature, then the child's chameleon wishes the next day may be a trip to Disneyworld, if properly coached. Maybe child support is consistently late and mom can't pay the bills. Should her ill-advised bursts of frustration now really translate into a change of custody?

My strong advice: Take the pressure off the child. Sit down with your ex and start compromising for the child's sake. If you can't get past your mutual distrust, hatred and anger get help from a mediator or a therapist. No rules about "when that kid turns 12 she's moving in with me and that will show her" is going to turn your daughter into a better person, a moral woman, a loving individual with a peaceful soul.

When she's older you want her to say "my daddy did the right thing." Remember also the words of William Blake: *"we become what we behold."* So set an example – lest your bitter child develops her own troubled relationships.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, with experience in family law for 33 years. Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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Israeli secular court to rule on Orthodox conversions

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

There's a lacuna in Israeli law – a gap, an opening into which Rabbi Seth Farber and the organization he heads, ITIM, is hoping to wedge a size 12 shoe.

So far the door is ajar, but whether it's slammed shut remains to be seen.

ITIM, a non-profit organization that helps people navigate Israeli religious bureaucracy, is supporting Martina Ragacova and two others who are suing the Israeli government for the right to have their private Orthodox conversions recognized by state authorities. A decision is expected in the next few months and if Ragacova is successful, it could end the monopoly of the Chief Rabbinate on conversions when it comes to determining an applicant's citizenship and status in the State of Israel.

At the same time, ITIM is promoting an alternative conversion system called Giyur Kehalacha (Conversion According to Halachah), an Orthodox process that has brought more than 70 people into the Jewish fold.

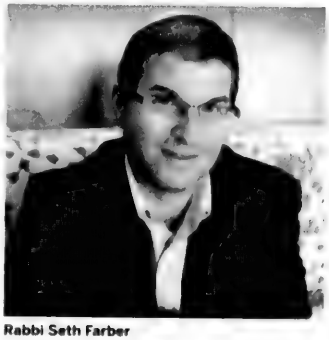
Breaking "the hegemony" of the Chief Rabbinate is crucial, Rabbi Farber said. At stake is nothing less than the future of the Jewish People. "After the security situation, this is the most important part of life in Israel. It's about who's in, who's out and whether we are going to let a small band of rabbis decide that and put up barriers to entering the Jewish fold," he said.

Rabbi Farber, an American who made aliyah 20 years ago, said a consensus has emerged in Israeli society that conversions outside the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate should be recognized. Rabbi Farber was in Toronto last week as part of a brief overseas visit sponsored by Torah in Motion to inform members of the Jewish community about recent developments in Israel. He spoke at Or Chaim Yeshiva in Toronto, as well as in Ottawa, Phoenix and Los Angeles.

Rabbi Farber said the High Court decision will have implications for issues such as registration as a recognized Jew, marriage and citizenship.

The Chief Rabbinate wishes to keep to itself the right to determine who is properly converted to Judaism. In doing so, it's imposing strict standards on conversions, ignoring halachic precedents that permit a more lenient approach, he added.

Rabbi Farber said controversy over conversion has been brewing in Israel ever since the massive wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union began in the 1980s. More than one million people moved to Israel, but as many as 350,000 were not halachically Jewish.



Rabbi Seth Farber

As a result, they were unable to be married in Israel in the courts controlled by the Chief Rabbinate. "They did not have the full rights as Jews, even though they came as Jews and self identified as Jews." They lived in Israel, served in the army, participated in the country's life but weren't considered fully Jewish. "That created a lot of resentment," he said.

Ragacova was converted in Bnei Brak by the rabbinic court of Rabbi Nissim Karelitz, who is highly respected in the ultra-Orthodox world. Nevertheless, the Chief Rabbinate refused to recognize that conversion and any others not performed by its roster of 33 rabbis.

Moreover, it is increasingly imposing strict criteria that are not necessary under Halachah, said Rabbi Farber.

One example – not cited by Farber – is the case of Karen Brunwasser. Brunwasser's father is Jewish. Her mother was not, but both she and her mother were converted by an Orthodox rabbinic court in Philadelphia when she was an infant. When Brunwasser moved to Israel, she learned the Chief Rabbinate did not accept the validity of the conversion, because two of the rabbis who officiated had also presided over congregations that had mixed seating.

That's the kind of thing that has prompted concern in the Diaspora. "The North American Jewish community is perturbed by the expanding powers of the Chief Rabbinate, because it is being exported to North America," Rabbi Farber said.

Efforts to expand the number of Orthodox rabbis empowered to perform conversions seems to have run into a roadblock. In 2004, then-prime minister Ariel Sharon created a Conversion Authority to try to bring into the Jewish fold the thousands of Russian Jews. But recently the Conversion Authority was transferred from the Justice Ministry to the Religious Services Ministry, which is controlled by Shas, a religious party.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Activists seek end to Chief Rabbinate monopoly

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Other reforms that would have permitted municipal rabbis to create their own conversion courts have been stopped, *Ha'aretz* reported.

"A group of rabbis and activists realized a red line had been crossed, that the Conversion Authority would remain the same and after discussing it with the moderate religious Zionist community, the die was cast to create an alternative Orthodox conversion court. This is the first mainstream Orthodox challenge to the hegemony of the Chief Rabbi of Israel," Rabbi Farber said.

Twenty-one Orthodox rabbis perform conversions under Giyur Kehalacha auspices, primarily for children. The courts are given a high degree of credibility because of the involvement of prominent Orthodox scholars. The president of the conversion courts is Rabbi Nahum Rabinovitch, formerly of Toronto, while Rabbi David Stav, a respected scholar, is also part of the new system, Rabbi Farber said.

"What differentiates these conversions is our human approach and our halachic approach. We start with the premise that they self-identify as Jews and they want to share our destiny and we want to work together to bring them into the halachic Jewish fold," he said.

"We don't see ourselves as gatekeepers trying to keep people out. We see ourselves as representatives of a halachic community, trying to help people come in."

Rabbi Farber hopes the Supreme Court will see it the same way and by approving a conversion outside the Chief Rabbinate's authority, end its monopoly on determining who is a Jew. ■

'To me, it is not a helpful resolution'

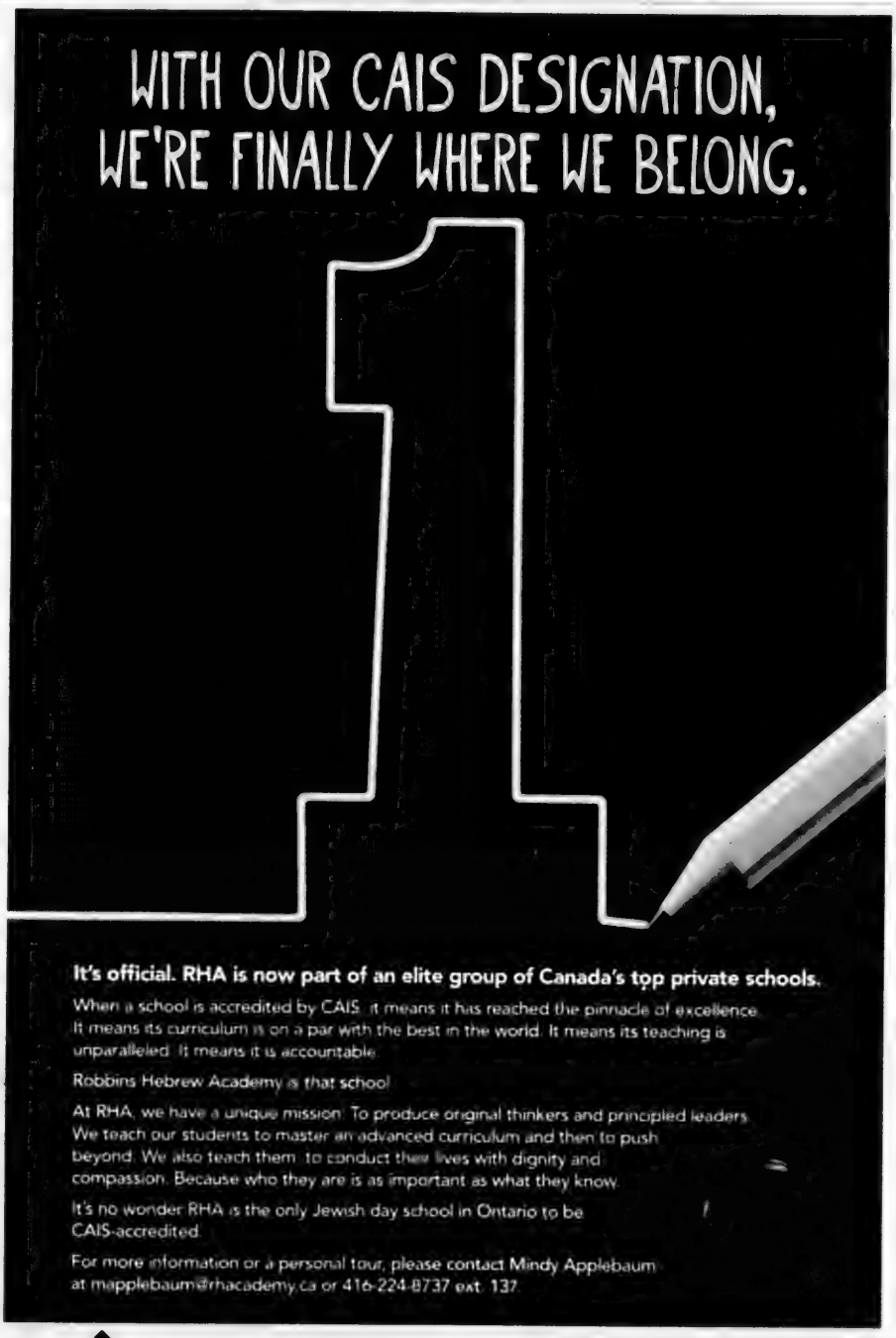
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

"To me, it is not a helpful resolution. It is still certainly a reaffirmation of what Orthodoxy stands for, which is very traditional gender roles for men and women and part of those carefully assigned gender roles are that men should be the religious leaders on the pulpit, and women should take other roles of leadership such as the educators and head mistresses of schools and so forth," he said.

"That being said, the vast majority of the officers of the RCA felt that this was not a helpful resolution to be brought forward at the current time."

In a statement to *The CJN*, Rabbi Chaim Strauchler, spiritual leader at Toronto's Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, who sits on RCA's executive committee, said, "Female leadership is crucial to the past, present and future of our community. This leadership will continue to evolve through the life work of great women committed to the process of Halachah and to the social dynamics of a living breathing community."

Although the resolution has no direct impact on the maharot currently working in Orthodox communities, Maharat Finegold said, "I think it does raise the question of how comfortable will people feel in the future making new hires. But I think there is also a deep desire. I talk to people all the time who say, 'We really need a maharat in our community.' And there just aren't enough of us to go around." ■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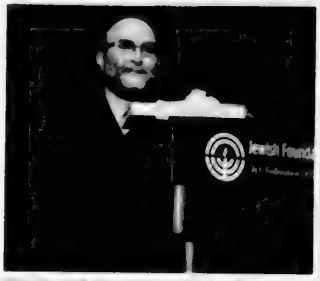

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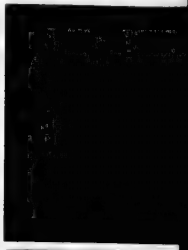

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Yitzhak Navon buried in state funeral on Mount Herzl

JTA
JERUSALEM

Yitzhak Navon, Israel's first Sephardi president and the first president to visit Egypt, was buried in a state funeral on Mount Herzl.

Navon, who served from 1978 to 1983, died Nov. 6 at 94. His body lay in state on Sunday morning before his funeral at noon. Along with his family, the mourners included current and former Israeli leaders.

In his eulogy at the funeral, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Navon "a jewel that adorned our capital, Jerusalem."

Navon served in four Knessets, becoming one of the Labor Party's most respected members. He served one term as president; he chose not to vie for the position a second time, preferring to serve again in the Knesset. During his presidential term, he threatened to resign unless an investigation committee was set up to look at the events that took place in 1982 at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, where an Israel-allied Lebanese Christian militia massacred hundreds of people.

Yitzhak Navon, Israel's fifth president, lies in state at the President's residence in Jerusalem.

Netanyahu also remembered Navon earlier Sunday, at the beginning of the weekly Cabinet meeting.

"Israel's heritage was his guiding principle as president, especially the heritage of Sephardi Jewish communities, and he also worked to advance this heritage among all parts of the nation as deputy prime minister, minister of education and culture and – of course – as president," the prime minister said.

"I will always remember the clarity of his spoken Hebrew. The love of Jerusalem was embedded deep in his heart; this was the city in which he grew up and lived, and wrote books to which he was deeply linked. He will be remembered as a president who brought people together; his memory will be enshrined in the heart of the nation."

The current Israeli president, Reuven Rivlin, who also eulogized Navon at the funeral, said in an earlier statement that Navon "created a new style and practice for the presidency. Yitzhak was a noble man, unceremoniously aristocratic, a president who came from the people, and whom the people greatly loved and appreciated."

Navon, Israel's fifth president, was born to a Sephardi family who had lived in Jerusalem for over 300 years.

He worked as a teacher and in the 1940s became an officer in the Haganah, which later became the Israel Defence Forces. He was one of the closest advisers to Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, and also served as private secretary to Israel's first foreign minister, Moshe Sharet.

Navon was the author of several books and a play. ■

Reform Jews cheer Biden's support for Israel

JTA
ORLANDO, FLA.

Thousands of Reform Jews cheered U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden's criticism of Israeli settlements, but were even more boisterous in applauding his pledge to fight the delegitimization of Israel and to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

In a keynote address to 5,000 people at the 2015 Biennial of the Union for Reform Judaism, Biden acknowledged disagreements between the Obama administration and Israeli government over settlements and the Iran deal. But, he added, the "core of our alliance is as strong as steel."

"No one president or prime minister can alter that no matter what they do," Biden said.

Biden stressed the need to turn the focus on the Iran deal to ensuring that Iran lives up to its commitments. The vice-president pledged that if Iran tries to cheat, sanctions will snap back. If Iran does cheat, he added, all options – including the "use of military force" – remain on the table for stopping any future Iranian pursuit of a nuclear weapon.

"We simply will not permit Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon. Period. Period," he said.

Biden received strong applause for his comments on stopping Iran, as well as his pledge that the Obama administration would work with Israel to strengthen its military capability in the face of a host of regional threats.

Later in the 45-minute speech, the vice-president received a standing ovation when he promised that the Obama administration would fight efforts to delegitimize Israel and likened some harsh criticism of the Jewish state to anti-Semitism. He also received a standing ovation when he stressed the need for a two-state solution.

The audience cheered when he declared that "there is no excuse, there should be no tolerance for any member or employee of the Israeli administration referring to the president of the United States in derogatory terms. Period. Period. Period. Period." The comment appeared to be a reference to Ran Baratz, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's pick to serve as his media chief. After announcing the potential appointment, it surfaced that Baratz, a former university lecturer, posted on Facebook in March that Obama's reaction to Netanyahu's speech to Congress was "modern anti-Semitism." He also has mocked Secretary of State John Kerry and Israeli President Reuven Rivlin.

"Not withstanding those terrible comments," Biden said, "no one, no one, no one can undermine our relationship and the security of the Jewish and democratic State of Israel."

Baratz has apologized both for the comments and for not informing Netanyahu about them. For his part, the prime minister has criticized the comments – but has not backed off his plans to appoint Baratz.

Biden praised Rabbi David Saperstein, the longtime director of the Reform movement's Washington office who now serves as United States ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom. Saperstein was honoured earlier in the evening. And the vice-president thanked the Reform movement for working with him for decades on a host of liberal domestic issues, as well as efforts to bring Soviet Jews and Ethiopian Jews to Israel in the 1980s and to stop genocide in the Balkans in the 1990s. He also praised the Reform movement for quickly backing him in 2012 when he got ahead of the president in voicing support for legalized gay marriage.

The vice-president attributed the Reform movement's activism to its immigrant history.

"You don't forget," Biden said. "That's what I love about you. You do not forget." ■

Abbas proves he's no partner for peace: Israeli minister

TAMAR PILEGGI
JERUSALEM

Israel's Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz claimed Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas was directly responsible for incitement behind the recent upsurge in Palestinian terrorism, and that this proved he was an unsuitable partner in pursuing a peaceful solution to the conflict.

"The wave of terrorism took off in large part due to Abu Mazen's incitement," Steinitz said on Nov. 7, using the Palestinian leader's nom de guerre, "and he cannot be absolved of his responsibility for this terrorism."

At a cultural event in Ness Ziona, Steinitz said Abbas "has still not proven to be a partner for peace, and the critical thing to do now is to stop incitement."

"There hasn't been a government that has been able to end the conflict, this is the reality in the Middle East. No one has a magic solution, not a right-wing government and not a left-wing government," he added.

U.S. officials said last Thursday that U.S. President Barack Obama has made a "realistic assessment" that a peace deal between Israelis and Palestinians is not possible during his final months in office. The stark assessment came ahead of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to the White House Nov. 9, the first meeting between the two leaders in more than a year.

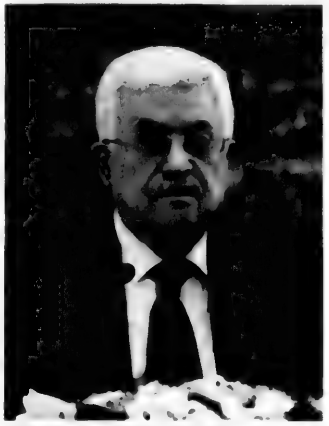
Last month, on the sidelines of Israeli-American Council in Washington D.C., Steinitz leveled similar criticisms against Abbas, describing him as "the number one instigator in the world against the Jewish people and the state of Israel."

"There is a great similarity between the incitement of the Palestinian Authority under Abu Mazen and the incitement of the Nazis against the Jewish people before the Second World War," he charged.

"To speak of Abbas' part [in the violence] is the understatement of the century," Steinitz said.

Israel's energy minister insisted that while Abbas condemned Palestinian terrorism to world leaders, the subtext of Palestinian Authority-sponsored media proved the insincerity of his condemnation.

Steinitz at the time said that 18 months earlier he had presented members of the U.S. Congress with evidence of incitement, including PA-sponsored children's magazines that he said featured positive images of Hitler.



Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas

Like Steinitz, Netanyahu and other top Israeli officials have repeatedly accused Abbas and his government of fueling the surge in terrorism, in part by peddling "lies" about purported Israeli plans to change the status quo at Jerusalem's flashpoint Temple Mount holy site.

Incitement to violence by Abbas and others, they charge, is a major catalyst for the recent wave of Palestinian terrorism in which 11 Israelis have been killed in the spate of near-daily attacks since Oct. 1 and dozens have been wounded.

Over 60 Palestinians have been killed in the latest round of violence, the majority of them while carrying out stabbing attacks against Israelis. The rest died in clashes with Israeli military forces.

On Friday Nov. 8, 369 members of the U.S. House of Representatives urged Abbas to cease inciting violence, to continue security co-operation with Israel and to agree to renew peace talks without conditions.

The bipartisan letter made clear that US lawmakers saw Abbas and other PA officials responsible for inciting violence against Israelis, and unless calm was restored there'll be little chance for a two-state solution. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com
Rebecca Shimoni Stoil contributed to this report.

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Canadian artist explores healing through a giant egg

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, JERUSALEM

When the people of Israel needed healing, Canadian performance artist Alana Ruben Free offered it in the form of a giant egg, exploring motherhood as part of the second Jerusalem Biennale, from Sept. 24 to Nov. 5.

The 8-foot-tall (2.5 metre) aluminum egg weighs half a metric ton (1,100 pounds), and can seat three or four people comfortably along the curved bench inside. Part of Free's performance piece entitled "Presence=Present," it stood in the Hechal Shlomo gallery at the heart of an exhibit called "The Art of Motherhood." Free created the egg in collaboration with Israeli sculptor David Gerstein.

In "Presence=Present," the viewer is also the performer. Visitors viewed the egg from the outside, then entered it to sit inside for a two-minute period, alone or with a loved one.

Free offered a text to say aloud, which reads, "I love you / I trust you / I respect you / I appreciate your presence in my life." Silence or other words could be substituted.

The idea for the experience "germinated," Free told *The CJN*, for more than a

Alana Ruben Free in front of her egg

decade, during which she explored themes of motherhood in other creative ways.

Free was born in Fredericton, N.B., and earned a degree in business from Western University, where she was a Rhodes Scholar finalist, and a master's degree in Jewish Studies from Touro College in New York. She helped found the Mom Egg literary journal and presented a number of plays and performance art pieces all over North America before making aliyah two years ago.

In "Presence=Present," Free envisioned an escape from a "technologically complex world, with continual distractions, [and where] alienation and loneliness are common conditions."

"I was contemplating what [would be] the best way to give my audience the experience of love. I was thinking about public meditative spaces, how to create a sacred space in the public."

Around 500 people entered the egg during the Biennale, including her own 20-year-old son, and, at the closing event on Nov. 4, her parents, Allen and Rhona Ruben of Toronto. She entered the egg with each one in turn.

Visitor numbers were lower than expected due to ongoing violence and stabbings in Jerusalem. However, Free called the experience's healing potential ideal and well-timed. "I have well over 200 testimonials of people who have been in the egg," One wrote, "I felt myself pure and new, returning to the womb." Another, "During this time of terrible violent acts by our enemies, it gave me a sense of peace."

"It's very beautiful... to be a witness to so much love," said Free, saying one couple from Vancouver Island spontaneously decided to redo their marriage vows inside the egg.

The Biennale (pronounced "bee-en-ah-LAY") concept began in Venice in 1895, and has grown to more than 200 events all over the world, including Montreal and Vancouver.

Galleries all over the city showcased nearly 200 artists who explored sacred texts, relationships between Diaspora and Israeli Jews, and the city of Jerusalem itself.

Ram Ozeri, founder of the Jerusalem Biennale, called Free's piece, "one of the most important and brilliant art pieces we had... It's a very updated medium, unconventional; it's an installation and a performance coming together."

He was surprised, entering the egg with his wife and son. "From the outside, it looks like one thing ... But there's something so unique, when you sit there inside an art piece. You feel so intimate, and so close to someone that you care about."

While most artists did not remain with their pieces during the entire Biennale, Free spent almost every day introducing and guiding visitors from all over the world. "Something shifts when you enter it," she said. "It's a bit of a magical space. It opens people's hearts; it opens their imagination." ■

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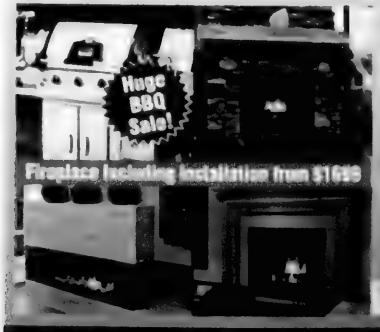

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For Reform Jews, some good news on engagement

STEVEN M. COHEN
JTA, NEW YORK

While the 2013 Pew survey uncovered some disturbing evidence of lower levels of Jewish engagement among young people, the same survey contains several pieces of good news for Reform Jews 5,000 of whom are gathering this week in Orlando, Fla., for the movement's biennial conference organized by the Union for Reform Judaism.

Since 1990, Reform synagogue members not only grew in number, but they held steady on several measures of Jewish engagement, even as their rate of intermarriage soared and the number with predominantly Jewish friends declined. The positive indicators point to the movement having the human assets it will need as it confronts a variety of challenges ahead.

These inferences, which must be regarded with caution, derive from comparisons I drew between the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) and the Pew survey. While both studies are highly regarded by survey professionals, such comparisons are tricky, in part owing to the vastly different survey methodologies. (As Pew surveyed individuals in 2013 and NJPS surveyed households in 1990, I converted the 1990 respondents to stand for individual adult Jews rather than the entire household.)

That said, it appears that the numbers of Reform synagogue members rose from about 623,000 in 1990 to approximately 756,000 in 2013, commensurate with the expanding number of adult Jews overall, which grew from 4.3 million to 5.3 million during the same time period. In addition, with intermarriage four times higher in 2013 than in 1990 (31 per cent of married Jews vs. less than eight per cent in 1990 among Reform temple members), far more non-Jews were affiliated with Reform temples in 2013 than their rather paltry numbers in 1990 when intermarriage was far more rare.

Along with the increase in intermarriage came a decrease in the number of Reform temple members with mostly Jewish close friends. Standing at 36 per cent in 2013, the comparable number had been 49 per cent in 1990. Obviously, Jewish spouses and Jewish friends go hand in hand, both empirically and metaphorically.

Despite the increased intermarriage and diminished Jewish social networks (Jewish friends and family), the 1990 to 2013 period saw hardly any change in the proportions who celebrate Jewish holidays, to take one telling domain of Jewish engagement.

> *The Jews who joined Reform temples were as active in Jewish life, if not more so, as their counterparts in 1990.*

For Reform temple members, seder attendance reached 94 per cent in 2013, just above the 91 per cent reported in 1990. It looks like Yom Kippur fasting also grew, to 75 per cent, from the 70 per cent 23 years earlier. Attending High Holiday services (at least at some point) reached 95 per cent among temple members, jumping markedly from 81 per cent in 1990. In another domain, the proportion that said they gave something to Jewish charities also ticked upward to 85 percent from 80 percent.

To be sure, not all indicators of Jewish engagement moved upward. The survey comparisons show slight declines in some other indicators. Comparing 2013 with 1990, we find drops in monthly service attendance (34 per cent in 2013 vs. 40 per cent in 1990), in usually lighting Shabbat candles (21 per cent "now" vs. 27 per cent then), in belonging to a Jewish organization (46 per cent vs. 49 per cent in 1990), and in feeling that being Jewish is very important (a slight decline to 60 per cent from 63 per cent in 1990).

But given the surveys' differences in sampling, in how respondents understood the questions, in the way they were interviewed and in whom they represent, we can't take the small differences in either direction too seriously.

The overall conclusion: not only did Reform temples affiliate more adult Jews in 2013, but the Jews who joined them were as active in Jewish life, if not more so, as their counterparts in 1990.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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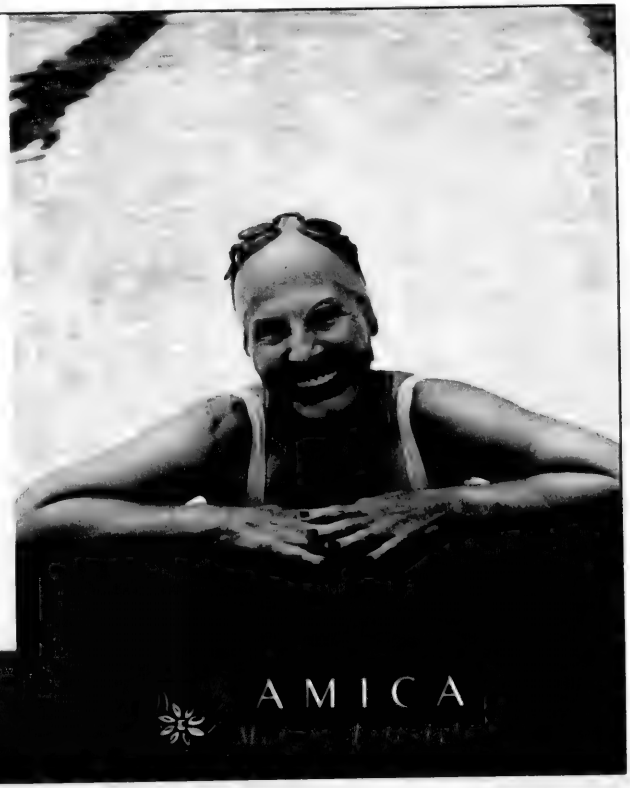

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The cover photo on the PLO Facebook page

PLO launches Hebrew Facebook page

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
JERUSALEM

The Palestinian national movement has launched a Hebrew-language Facebook page whose purpose is to make the Palestinians' case to Israeli Jews.

The Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) "Committee for Interaction with Israeli Society" published its first post on the social network last week.

The outreach body, founded in December 2012, explains its vision in one of its earliest posts: "Reaching a just and sustainable solution to the Middle East conflict depends on the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel on the basis of the 4 June 1967 lines and a just and agreed-upon solution to the refugee problem on the basis of UN resolution 194."

Titled "Palestine in Hebrew," the page's messages are geared toward Israelis and their concerns, telling them, "The occupation is the enemy, oppressing our lives and corrupting yours."

It employs hashtags – a kind of tagging that sorts posts by searchable subjects – that urge Israelis to act politically, such as "#be_responsible_end_the_occupation."

> *The occupation is the enemy, oppressing our lives and corrupting yours*

And it includes high-production-value videos that counter Israeli perceptions of international moves taken by the Palestinian Authority (PA) in recent years, such as explaining in Hebrew that "the appeal to the UN" for recognition of a state of Palestine "was never meant to isolate Israel or hurt its legitimacy, but to emphasize the illegitimacy of the occupation that began in 1967 in order to end it."

It also carries a speech by PA President Mahmoud Abbas.

The page had a scant 179 "likes" by last Sunday morning, though millions of Israelis are on Facebook, by far the most popular social network among Hebrew speakers.

But it has already drawn Israeli-Jewish responses and counter-arguments to the claims made in its posts, and its establishment was reported in mainstream Israeli media Nov. 8 including Israel Radio's morning news broadcast.

One Israeli posted to the page a 1910 newspaper clipping of an Arab attack on a Jew in Jaffa, with the sarcastic comment, "Because of the occupation," suggesting that Arab violence against Jews preceded the 1967 conquest of the West Bank and Gaza. In one post, the PLO page complained of Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked's proposal to require political advocacy groups to wear tags in the Knesset similar to those worn by lobbyists, saying, "We will be identified by the tags Shaked is requiring us to wear."

That first-person reference led one commenter on the page to say, "It appears that this page is actually run by Israeli left-wingers in the PLO's name."

There was no immediate word on the identity of the page's administrators, though the Hebrew is fluent and largely error-free, including when translating linguistically difficult passages from the poems of the Palestinian national poet, Mohammed Darwish. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

Israeli said to pass on intelligence re: downed airline

JTA
JERUSALEM

Some of the intelligence intercepts being used to assess what happened to a Russian airplane that crashed over the Sinai Peninsula came from Israel.

Israeli officials would not comment on the claims by an unnamed U.S. official and a diplomatic source, *CNN* reported Sunday.

The communications between the Islamic State affiliates in Sinai were captured by Israeli intelligence focused there and passed along to the United States and Britain, the sources said, *CNN* reported.

Investigators looking into the crash of the Metrojet flight bound for Russia told *Reuters* on Sunday that they are "90 per cent sure" a bomb on board is the cause. All 224 people aboard were killed in the Oct. 31 crash, including a former program director for Hillel Russia.

The Sinai affiliate of the Islamic State claimed responsibility for bringing down the passenger flight, saying it was in retaliation for Russian airstrikes on rebels in Syria's civil war.

Russia began launching airstrikes on Syria in September, saying it was coordinating with Syrian President Bashar Assad to combat terror groups such as the Islamic State. ■

Reform movement growing but also greying

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Now, any discussion of Reform temple members immediately provokes curiosity about Reform-identified non-members. From 1990 to 2013, how did they change? For the most part they experienced the same sorts of changes as were recorded among Reform temple members. They grew in number (though not as much), rising from 912,000 to 1,154,000. Their intermarriage rates jumped significantly, almost doubling from 34 per cent to 66 per cent (of those who were married at the time of each survey). And the numbers of those with mostly Jewish friends declined – from 30 per cent in 1990 to 23 per cent in 2013.

Notwithstanding the weakening of Jewish social networks, among adult Jews who identify as Reform yet belong to no congregation, the 2013 vs. 1990 comparisons show generally small changes in both directions on those measures of Jewish identity that were found in both studies.

The increased numbers of Reform congregants and their steady levels of Jewish engagement should certainly hearten both clergy and lay leaders of Reform congregations and the continental movement. At the same time, serious challenges are not only on the horizon, but have arrived. Among them are the sharply declining numbers of younger adult congregants, illustrated by the rise of average age from 46 in 1990 to 52 in 2013, as well as the very small number of Reform-identified congregants 35-44 (73,000) as compared with the far larger number just 20 years older (224,000).

Another issue is the very high rate of intermarriage – roughly 80 per cent among married Reform-raised Jews during 2000-13.

Yet the over-time patterns do suggest that collectively, the Reform population can contend with high and rising rates of intermarriage, with two provisos: that intermarried couples affiliate with congregations, and that they undertake several other acts of Jewish engagement and commitment. ■

Steven M. Cohen is Research Professor at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the Reform movement's flagship seminary.

Many terrorists are not on Facebook as media claim

AVI ISSACHAROFF
JERUSALEM

Palestinian stone throwers clash with Israeli soldiers near Ramallah in the West Bank on Nov. 6. Many of the attackers are not drawn to the cause by social media, Avi Issacharoff argues. FLASH90 PHOTO

Pundits have explained countless times over the past month that part of the current outburst of violence, perhaps even most of it, is the direct result of incitement on Palestinian social media. Again and again, Facebook was singled out as a central driving engine of the latest escalation, which is described in Palestinian media as the "Al-Quds [Jerusalem] intifadah."

But from interrogations by Israeli investigators of the terrorists and other attackers arrested following recent attacks, or who were caught on the way to carrying them out, a different and surprising picture emerges.

Many of the attackers do not have accounts on Facebook, or on any other social networks. The online videos urging attacks on Jews have not reached them. They were motivated to strike by incitement of the old variety, the sort that played a dominant role in the last century: conversations, coffeehouse chatter; some television broadcasts, to be sure; but primarily the lightning-fast spread of rumours from mouth to ear. It is these that is triggering a substantial proportion of the latest mobilization against the Jews.

In the past, this phenomenon was called *fazaah*, an Arabic term for an alarm or loud cry intended to drive its audience to attack. That old mechanism seems to be at the heart of the incitement driving this latest "intifadah," which has seen the instruments of incitement known from as far back as the Arab revolt of 1936 combined with those of modern youths fed by (among other sources) the social networks of 2015.

Social networks are emphatically not absent from the arena. They play a clear role in igniting the passions of the current escalation, Hamas and others are making perniciously adept use of them, but they are apparently not as central as the media have hitherto suggested.

About half of urban Palestinian youths are on Facebook, but in villages and refugee camps the picture is very different. The attackers who came out of the villages of the Hebron region, for example, not only aren't on Facebook, they often live in homes without regular electricity service.

One young woman from a village near Nablus told investigators that her village does not have a steady supply of power, and explained that she decided to carry out an attack when she happened to hear someone saying aloud that Hudai Hashalmoun, a niqab-wearing Palestinian woman who was shot by a Givati soldier in Hebron as she attempted a stabbing attack, was murdered in cold blood, butchered and desecrated. She decided then and there to carry out an attack to avenge the death of a young woman she did not know.

This story is emblematic of another dramatic finding from the interrogations: a number of the attackers set out on their attacks within less than an hour of being exposed to purported news or rumour, whether through online videos or word of mouth, of the "murders" of Palestinians by Israel. Others planned their attacks over time and even filmed their final testaments in videos intended to be broadcast after their deaths.

The fact that some of the attackers were spurred to action by a simple statement from neighbours and family members, or by graphic pictures from deadly protests or previous terror attacks aired on television, highlights the abiding importance of these traditional platforms in driving the violence. Indeed, the most prominent media outlet cited by the attackers as influencing their decision was Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV, which has a wide following in the West Bank, along with Islamic Jihad's channel and two others: Al-Quds and Palestine Mubasher. All are popular Palestinian television outlets whose broadcasts, Israeli investigators believe, are contributing to the terrorists' sense of mission.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) is working to prevent these outlets' incitement to violence, but the Al-Aqsa channel has been able to bypass the authority's oversight through the simple expedient of using real-time broadcasts from reporters through their cellphones to deliver the claims that help create the atmosphere of *fazaah*.

The PA has a similarly difficult time controlling the wild frontiers of social media. Here, too, the general view of what has been happening is a little misconceived: the notion that many recently launched Facebook pages calling for a third intifadah are the work of individuals, or of local initiatives, is not entirely correct. The role of Hamas in leading this discourse on Facebook is becoming more evident to the security services. Hamas now operates no small number of Facebook pages meant to fire up audiences to a modern-day *fazaah*. Some pages are based in Gaza and some in the West Bank.

That doesn't mean there aren't Facebook pages managed by independent individuals or ordinary Palestinians. But Hamas is now believed to be the dominant force driving the incitement in social media.

At the end of the day, the sheer number of Facebook pages working to inflame tensions has made it difficult for Israeli and Palestinian security services to disrupt the incitement efforts. As soon as one page is closed, many others are opened.

Israel has collected data on the identities of the attackers. In 33 days, 73 Palestinians set out to commit attacks: 24 from Jerusalem and surrounding villages; 47 from the West Bank. 32 of them from the Hebron area, and 20 from the city itself. Just two were Israeli citizens.

Six of the 73 were women. All but two were unmarried. The average age: 20.

City-dwellers outnumber rural Palestinians by almost two-to-one: Forty-five of the attackers came from cities or smaller towns (like Qabatiya), 24 from rural villages, and just four from refugee camps – or, to be exact, from one refugee camp, the east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Shuafat.

In that last figure lies perhaps the most dramatic difference between the current intifadah and those of 1987 and 2000. In the past, the refugee camps were at the forefront of the outbreak of violence and terror, and undertook much of the fighting. Today, despite the dismal economic and social conditions in the camps, they are not actually part of the stabbing intifadah. (Shuafat is more representative of the centrality of east Jerusalem in the phenomenon than of refugee camps generally.)

Whereas in the past, tens of thousands of camp residents took to the streets of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, joined the armed cells of Fatah and Hamas and constituted the "spearhead" of the violence, they are only peripheral actors in the protests taking place in the West Bank in recent weeks, and are unambiguously avoiding taking part in the stabbing attacks.

This absence may explain the broader lack of popular participation in the violence, which has thus far been limited to a few thousand activists.

It is hard, and perhaps impossible, to produce a straightforward profile of the "average terrorist" in this escalation. On one level, he is a young, unmarried man from east Jerusalem or Hebron. But as we have learned in recent days, some attackers come from elsewhere, some are women, some are educated and some less so.

Some are social outsiders, while others, like Muhannad Halabi, who began the wave of stabbing attacks with his early October killing of Nehemia Lavi and Aharon Bennett in Jerusalem's Old City, were socially popular. Among the women, the first female attackers were discernibly drawn from the sidelines of Palestinian society, but the attacks that came later were committed by women from social circles that represent the mainstream of Palestinian society in the West Bank.

These differences from the past, and the diversity of the attackers, make it hard to say where this is all heading. Security officials do not expect any significant reduction in the violence anytime soon, at least not while there is no diplomatic horizon. The reason for that assessment is tied to the PA's precarious position in this violence. Even as Fatah has disseminated calls for violence, and PA President Mahmoud Abbas has accused Israel of threatening Al-Aqsa and falsely charged Israel with executing innocent Palestinians, the PA has been a key factor in blunting incitement and violent opposition to Israel. Without a change in the PA's interactions with Israel – that is, a new diplomatic initiative that might give it a credible alternative to the violence – it will not be able to continue security co-ordination with Israel, or to help ensure the struggle remains diffuse and confined to the "popular," for very long. The latest escalation, in other words, runs a real risk of slipping into an armed intifadah. ■

Times of Israel
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DESTINATIONS

Things you must do in Tel Aviv

ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN
ISRAEL 21C

The municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo (Jaffa) is nicknamed "The Non-Stop City" but its world-famous nightlife scene is just one of the many facets of this diamond of a city – Israel's second-largest in population after Jerusalem.

Also known as The Big Orange, this 20-square-mile seaside city boasts multiple foreign embassies, museums and cultural centres, including the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Beit Hatfutsot-Museum of the Jewish People, Tel Aviv Performing Arts Center, Habima National Theater, Cameri Theater, Suzanne Dellal Center for Dance and Theater and many others.

You'll need more than a day to soak up everything Tel Aviv has to offer. Fortunately the city has about 10,000 hotel rooms, with global chains such as Sheraton, Hilton, Carlton and Intercontinental, as well as a fast-growing boutique hotel sector.

We suggest you start by staking a spot in the sand.

Hang out at the beach:

It's not for nothing that *National Geographic* recently named Tel Aviv-Yafo one of the world's top 10 oceanfront cities – though technically the city's 14 kilometres (nearly nine miles) of 13 official beaches face the Mediterranean Sea rather than the ocean. From May through mid-October, lifeguards are on duty and you can rent beach chairs and umbrellas, windsurfers, surfboards, sailboats, motorboats and diving equipment.

Dolphinarium Beach is best known for its drumming circles, Capoeira dancers and windsurfers; Gordon and Aviv beaches are great for volleyball; surfing is tops at Hilton Beach, which is also the city's most gay-friendly beach and the only one with a section for dogs. Nordau Beach has separate-swimming hours (females on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday; males on Monday, Wednesday and Friday; Saturdays mixed).

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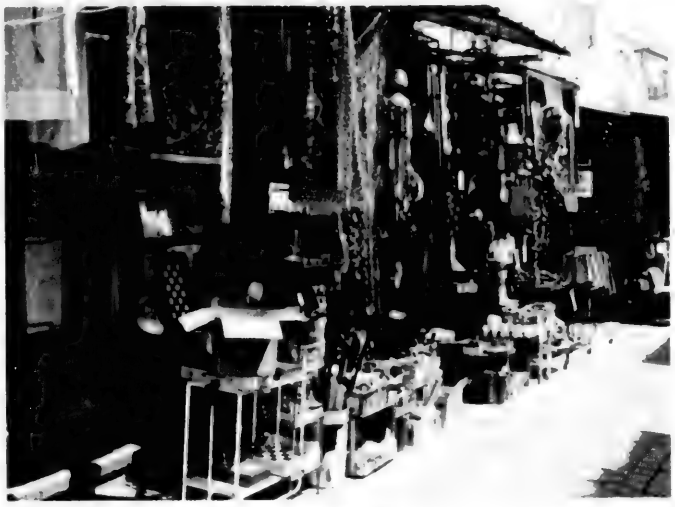

Yafo flea market ALBERTO PERAL / GOISRAEL.COM PHOTO

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Four beaches are wheelchair accessible (Hilton, Tzuk, Northern Tzuk, Metzitzim) and you will find matkot players on every beach.

Walk, jog, bike or Segway the seaside promenade:

The bustling Tel Aviv-Jaffa Promenade (Tayelet) is a series of boardwalks extending along the beach between the Jaffa Port in the south to Tel Baruch Beach, north of the Tel Aviv Port. This is your best opportunity for people-watching and snapping selfies against the incomparable backdrop of sea, sand and Mediterranean sunsets. Cafés and restaurants dot the central part of the promenade along Herbert Samuel Street, and there are plenty of benches where you can stop and sit along the way.

If you'd like to do this on wheels, rent a green bike at any of the city's Tel-O-Fun stations or sign up for a Segway beachfront tour if you're at least 16 years old.

See where it all began at Independence Hall, 16 Rothschild Boulevard:

On May 14, 1948, David Ben Gurion read Israel's Declaration of Independence in this building, which has been preserved to look exactly like it did on that day. Take a guided tour to find out all about the dramatic founding of the state of Israel.

Old Jaffa port DANA FRIEDLANDER / GOISRAEL.COM PHOTOS

Planetarium at Eretz Israel Museum

Discover Old Jaffa:

Part of the Tel Aviv municipality since 1950, the 5,000-year-old port city of Jaffa (Yafo) is where warriors, pilgrims, traders and tourists have historically entered the Holy Land bearing goods, ideas, fashion and stories. The tales of Jaffa are presented in a multimedia way at the Old Jaffa Visitors' Center built on the ruins of a Roman-era Jewish house in Kedumim Square; there's an archeological exhibition underneath.

The visitors' centre is a good place to start your tour of Jaffa, which should also include the world-famous Jaffa Flea Market and Jaffa Port, as well as ancient houses of worship, art galleries, the Wishing Bridge and the Zodiac Fountain. Take the centre's self-guided audio tour or the municipality's free guided walking tour on Wednesdays at 10 a.m., starting at the iconic Jaffa Clock Tower built in 1901, at the intersection of Marzuk and Azar streets.

Get acculturated at the Eretz Israel Museum, 2 Haim Levanon Street:

This multidisciplinary museum is made up of pavilions spread over a vast green campus. You can choose to explore archaeology, Judaica, ethnography, history and culture of the Land of Israel, and traditional arts and crafts, including a glass pavilion. You can also visit the state-of-the-art planetarium and take advantage of seasonal cultural events and youth activities.

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Shopping for spices, left and vegetables in Carmel Market NOAM CHEN AND DANA FRIEDLANDER / GOISRAEL.COM PHOTOS

The Yarkon park and river

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Treat your taste buds at Sarona Market, 3 Kalman Magen St.:

The recently opened Sarona Market complex, Israel's largest indoor culinary marketplace, comprises 8,700 square metres filled with 91 shops, kiosks and restaurants, most open seven days a week. You'll find imported delicacies as well as Israeli fruits and vegetables from Emek Hefer and the Arava, lamb and veal from the Golan Heights, fresh fish from the Mediterranean Sea, local wines and boutique beers, spices, chocolates and handmade pastries.

It's also worthwhile to explore the (not as fancy) outdoor markets for which Tel Aviv is famous, including Shuk HaCarmel, Shuk HaNamal (Port Market), Shuk Levinsky and Shuk Hatikva.

Commune with nature-in-the-city at Yarkon Park (Ganei Yehoshua):

This spectacular urban oasis stretches for hundreds of acres along the Yarkon River and includes myriad activities and attractions including its own huge water park, a 45-foot climbing wall, hot-air balloon ride, basketball and rollerblading courts, playgrounds and trampolines, bike trails and bridges. Rent a paddle boat or a two-wheeler, tandem or family bike. Enjoy wildlife in the bird sanctuary and petting zoo.

Yarkon's 10-acre Rock Garden, one of the largest of its kind in the world, also contains 3,500 species of plants, including some six acres of cacti; the five-acre Tropical Garden features a wooden walkway shaded by towering palm trees around a little lake; and Seven Mills has restored historic flour mills on a stream where ducks and other waterfowl abound.

Hatahana: The New Station leisure and entertainment compound, HaMered and Kaufman streets:

At the southern end of Neve Tzedek is the Jaffa train station, built in 1892 as part of the first railway line between Jaffa and Jerusalem. From the end of World War I to the eve of the War of Independence in 1948, the line was operated by Palestine Railways. The scrupulously restored Templer-style building is the centrepiece of the popular leisure and entertainment complex opened here in 2010. Through 2015, Hatahana is featuring the 3-D 100-year history show "Virtual Time Travel Trailer" in carriage 24.

The parking is shared by the Israel Defence Forces History Museum, one of four military museums across Tel Aviv that you can access with one admission ticket.

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Dinah Kutner, general manager for El Al Canada, said that El Al has responded to customer's requests to be able to sleep even more comfortably than before on the 12-hour non-stop flight to Israel from Toronto.

"This is a very big deal for us, and we certainly anticipate a jump in sales," she said.

David Maimon, El Al CEO, said that "upgrading the seats, and making more space between rows in the premium classes on long-range aircraft is part of our ongoing strategy of improving the product and the overall El Al customer experience. We are continuously striving to provide the most advanced service to our customers."

El Al upgraded the seats to "bed-like" seats and is offering more space between rows. The upgraded aircraft offer 21 Business Class seats.

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The seat width is 50.8 centimetres and the "bed-like" seat features sitting, resting and sleep positions, leg support, and ergonomic support

Maimon said that in co-operation with Hollandia, recognized experts in precision-engineered sleep systems, a unique, luxurious mattress was designed for the comfort of premium class passengers. The mattress is made with tempur, a special advanced material used by NASA for upholstering seats on its spaceships.

In other El Al news, we are excited to announce that the signing ceremony has just ended, on Oct. 29, sealing El Al's purchase of new Dreamliner aircraft as part of the company's largest ever renewal program.

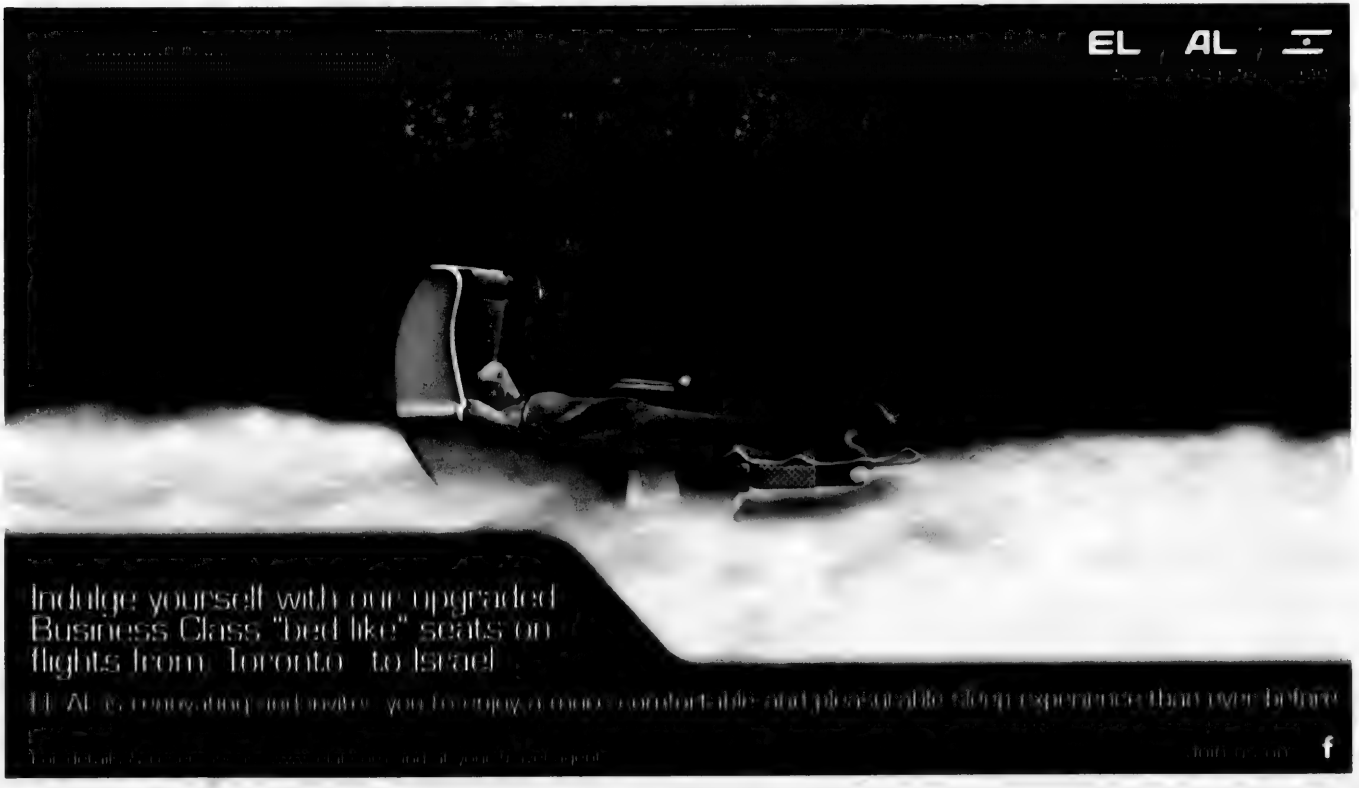
Ray Conner, president and CEO of the Boeing Company's Commercial Airplanes Group arrived in Israel to sign the deal with El Al president David Maimon. The ceremony was held in an El Al hangar at Ben-Gurion Airport in the presence of Israel's minister of transport, Yisrael Katz, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro, and Rabbi Meir Lau.

El Al expects to renew its fleet with 15 Dreamliners.

Maimon said this move is expected to constitute a significant step forward in the optimization of the network of routes, passenger service and flight experience.

During the next five years, he said, these aircraft will replace the 747-400 and 767 fleets and are designated to fly to medium and long-haul destinations such as Toronto, Boston, Bangkok, Beijing, Mumbai, South Africa and more.

"We shall continue to preserve our position as first choice in flying to and from Israel, and as a leading company offering its customers maximum comfort, technological innovation and quality service. I am convinced that this move is a great opportunity to meet the high standard expected of us and continue the momentum of El Al's innovation." ■



Jewish Life

Book passes the torch of Holocaust memory

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Seventy years after the end of World War II and 25 years after March of the Living (MOL) began bringing Jewish high school students and survivors to European death camps, MOL is employing the latest in 21st-century technology to help tell the story of the Holocaust.

MOL recently launched a handsome coffee table book titled *Witness: Passing the Torch of Holocaust Memory to New Generations*, which records the testimony of survivors and the reaction of students to the terrible events of the Holocaust. Built into several pages in each copy are digital watermarks that users can scan with a smartphone or tablet and then view video testimony by Holocaust survivors.

The free Digimarc Discover app allows readers to expand their experience of the book by viewing – or witnessing – the recorded first hand testimony of survivors themselves. The videos are provided by Steven Spielberg's USC Shoah Foundation Archives and MOL's Digital Archives Project.

The book itself is a treasure trove of photographs, poetry, commentary and history designed to enlighten a broad audience about the events of the Holocaust. Many of the survivors featured in the book are Canadian, including Nate Leipciger, Max Illand, Sidney Zoltak and Max Eisen. With 7,500 copies in print, there is also interest in translating the work into German, Spanish, French and Hebrew, among other languages, said Eli Rubenstein, national director of MOL Canada, who compiled *Witness*.

In gathering the content for the book, Rubenstein raided the MOL archives for photos, taken both by professional photographers who were part of the MOL team as well as those taken by participants. He combined them with the poems of the young participants and added sections to provide a historical underpinning to explain the events that led to the murder of Europe's Jews.

Rubenstein believes that the underlying message of the book is a positive one, despite the grisly historic event that is at its core.

"This book is about hope and making the world a better place. It's not about hate or revenge. The aim is to heal," he said.

In addition to survivor testimony, the book includes sections dedicated to Jews who fought back – both physically through force of arms and through spiritual resistance – to liberators and to Righteous Gentiles.

"No one survived unless someone helped them," Rubenstein said.

The book is based on an exhibit that premiered at United Nations headquarters in New York in 2014 under the title, *When You Listen to a Witness, You Become a Witness*. That exhibit, which is smaller in scale than what can be found in the book, will go on display later this month at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre at the Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan.

In a unique touch, the book opens with a message from Pope Francis, who expresses his support for March of the Living. In that, he was following in the footsteps of Pope John Paul II, who also supported the MOL initiatives of remembrance, Rubenstein said.

Witness was officially launched at Congregation Habonim last month and is on sale at Chapters Indigo and online at Amazon. Negotiations are under way to provide a downloadable version of the book, Rubenstein said. ■

Multi-faith university students on the March of Remembrance and Hope visit Majdanek camp.

Singer-songwriter on an emotional roller-coaster ride

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Dayna Shereck had never written a song until she turned 35, but after her divorce, when she was finding her way through relationships, she started hearing melodies in her head.

"I got a friend of mine to teach me about four chords on the guitar, and I must have written 12 or 15 songs right away," she said.

Now, five years later, one of her pop songs has been placed in a movie, and several artists, including country singer Marcum Stewart, have included her songs on their albums. She was a finalist in the Great American Song Contest and a semi-finalist in the International Songwriting Competition for 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Although she's more of a songwriter than a vocalist, Shereck sings beautifully on an EP of her alt country tunes that she released this year.

Shereck got her initial break in a difficult industry after she contacted the Songwriters Association of Canada. The organization hooked her up with a multi-platinum producer, Marcus Kane, who recognized her talent, and her first demo, *Faultlines*, was born.

Over the past five years, Shereck, who lives in Toronto, has made some 10 trips to Nashville to write and record. Her first taste of success in Nashville came when she co-wrote *All I Really Want Is You* with Stewart. The song was demoed and pitched to a major country artist later that same week.

Songwriter Dayna Shereck DAVID TURNBULL PHOTO

"That was the first thing that made me feel, I'm here and it's really happening," she said.

Thousands of artists are in Nashville pitching songs, writing and performing at any one time, and Shereck said the "nature of the business often dictates whether a song is cut by an artist." But she added that some people say the best songs do win in the end.

"When you're in Nashville, you're aware of the business, what they're looking for, and you can end up writing for the market. The commercial market is not where I target my stuff," she said. She's had a major label "hold," comparable to a reservation, placed on one of her songs, she said, but it didn't make it onto the artist's recording.

"So it's an emotional roller-coaster," she added. But the highs, when they happen, are exhilarating. The pop tune, *Whadaya Say*, which Shereck wrote with two co-writers, is a featured song in the 2015 movie *On the Wing*. It's been shown at several U.S. film festivals and took the Best Feature Award at the seventh annual Louisville International Festival of Film last month.

Whadaya Say is hopeful and romantic, Shereck said, adding that she usually writes "heavier, sadder stuff," like some of the songs on her EP, *Suitcase Full of Dreams*. The five-song EP, which she co-wrote with other songwriters, has a traditional country/bluegrass sound. It includes the track *Think Again*, a song about the fragility of love. *I Didn't Chase All the Good Ones Away* is a catchy tune about female empowerment, about valuing "yourself and hopefully one of the good ones will be there when you find yourself in that place," Shereck said. Shereck is again on her way to Nashville to pursue her dreams. "This time it's mostly about writing with people who I have already started things with, finishing songs that were in progress and writing new ones," she said.

Shereck, a mother of two, David, 11, and Olivia, 13, also works for a not-for-profit agency, helping people with barriers to employment find jobs. "I've always encouraged people to follow their dreams and that's what I'm doing now," Shereck said. ■

For more information about Shereck, visit www.songsbydayna.com and check out her blog at http://nashville-diaries.blogspot.ca. Suitcase Full of Dreams is available for download on iTunes.

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Nathan Fielder is the mensch Canada needs

Michael Fraiman

Canadian Jewish comic Nathan Fielder took to Conan O'Brien's talk show on Oct. 21 to reveal his latest business venture: a line of outerwear that is soft, durable, breathable and completely open in its acknowledgment that the Holocaust did indeed happen.

Fielder, a Vancouver native, had been wearing a windbreaker made by Taiga, a B.C. brand, for much of his life. Then he learned that a 2001 Taiga shopping catalogue included an obituary for a known Holocaust denier.

"As a Jew, I'm like, 'Oh, crap,'" Fielder told O'Brien on TV. "In searching for a replacement, I realized I couldn't be sure that any of these other jacket companies weren't hiding dark secrets as well." To play it safe, he decided to start his own.

And so was born Summit Ice, the world's first outdoor apparel company to openly promote Holocaust awareness. All proceeds have been going to the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre – so far, that's been more than $60,000 – promoted in part by celebrities wearing the jacket around Hollywood, including Seth Rogan, Ellie Kemper, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Rob Lowe, John Mayer and Jack Black.

By any measure, Fielder is not just a solid businessman and hilarious comic – he's also a mensch. Best of all, Canadians can be proud that he's our mensch.

That Fielder is sending Summit Ice's profits to a Vancouver Holocaust centre is a sigh of relief for Canadians sick of homegrown talent moving south and forgetting their roots. How can we still call Jim Carrey a Canadian when he's entrenched in American debates over measles vaccination and gun-control laws? Why should we keep fawning over Lorne Michaels when New York gave him *Saturday Night Live*, while the only thing Toronto gave him was a brief writing gig at CBC Radio?

On the surface, Fielder isn't any different. Like everyone else who outgrew this country, he moved on from a recurring domestic role – on *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* – to starring in his own Comedy Central show, *Nathan For You*.

The show follows Fielder around as he tries to help struggling businesses with plainly ridiculous ideas. It's a perfect set-up: Fielder's still so unknown and innocently straight-faced that his subtle improv echoes the genius of Stephen Colbert, Andy Kaufman and Sacha Baron Cohen.

But it wasn't until his Dumb Starbucks gag – wherein he tried to boost the popularity of a small, independent Los Angeles café by transforming it into a Starbucks parody, merely by mimicking everything about the gargantuan chain but preceding it with the word "dumb" (e.g. dumb venti lattes, dumb Norah Jones CDs, etc.) – that two things became clear.

One was that he was now a comedy superstar, as Dumb Starbucks exploded into an international sensation.

The second thing was that he had clearly outgrown Canada. He could never have created a pseudo-art installation like Dumb Starbucks here; our copyright laws are too strict, and our national sense of humour not quite so brazen. We're more reserved, much like Fielder's own onscreen persona.

So it was all the more refreshing to hear that he was maintaining that connection to his home city – and his Judaism – with Summit Ice. Fielder's still not as big a star as, say, Seth Rogen (the two were in the same high school improv class), so maybe that accounts for some lingering Canadian affinity. He's big, but he isn't so big that he's forgotten us yet.

But it may also be because Fielder is himself a quiet, sentimental man. He's notoriously secretive about his personal life, largely deemed a blank slate – a dead-eyed host who rarely smiles and keeps his show about his guests, not himself.

In a rare interview, he revealed that his TV character is an embellishment of his own nervous self, and his comedy derives from a very Canadian quality – people being too afraid to speak their minds.

But Fielder, onscreen, speaks his mind. He's shed that overly polite Canadian stereotype, but he hasn't forgotten his roots. The man, I say, is a true Canadian mensch. ■

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Village Shul aims to prove Jewish men can jump

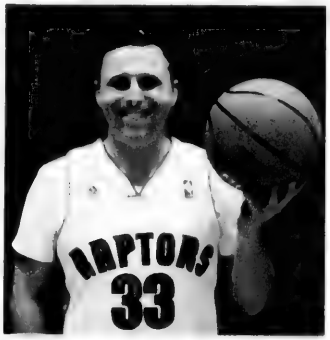
PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

If you're active around the rim, a baller who can dish it or drain a three-pointer, the Village Shul wants you.

The synagogue, located on Eglinton Avenue, is looking for 125 to 150 guys, to participate in its inaugural Toronto Jewish Men's 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament.

The event will take place on Tuesday, Dec. 1 from 6-10 p.m. at Hoopdome in Downsview Park. Its target is to raise $7,500 or more, but its goal is bigger than that, said tournament organizer Mike Fegelman.

"I'm really excited about getting people out regardless of religious background," he said. Shuls from across the city of Toronto and across the denominational spectrum have been contacted and asked to participate. It is the Village Shul's mandate to bring people together and support community engagement. Basketball is a perfect means to attract people for a fun event that will include sports, socializing and shmoozing, he said.



Mike Fegelman

A touch football event in June attracted about 100 players and raised $10,000 to support the synagogue's operating costs.

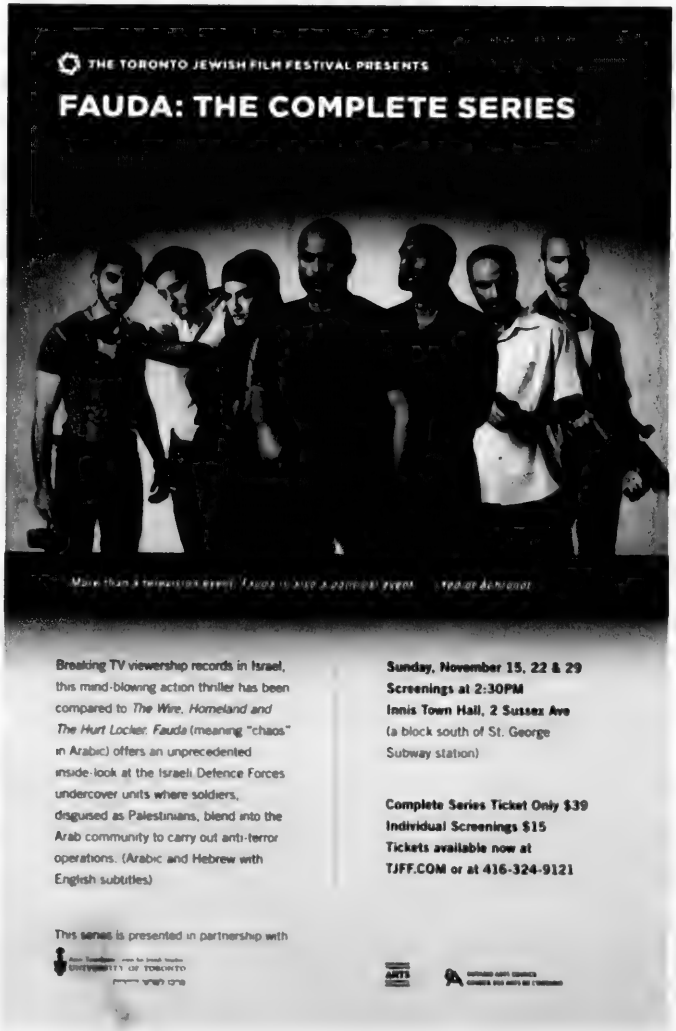
"It was phenomenal. What I loved about it was that it was a great opportunity to bring out Jews from all walks of life – young professionals to the older demographic," Fegelman said.

Funds for the hoops tourney will be raised from the $54 per person entry fee as well as from corporate sponsorship. Howie T's Burger Bar will provide the food and is the corporate sponsor. Tax receipts will be issued, he added.

In addition to the football game, held at nearby Cedarvale Park, the Village Shul has also sponsored a ladies' retreat at a private home in Forest Hill that included swimming, socializing and sushi, he said.

Also on the shul's agenda is a pool tournament some time in the new year, Fegelman added. ■

For more information, visit www.ourvillageshul.com.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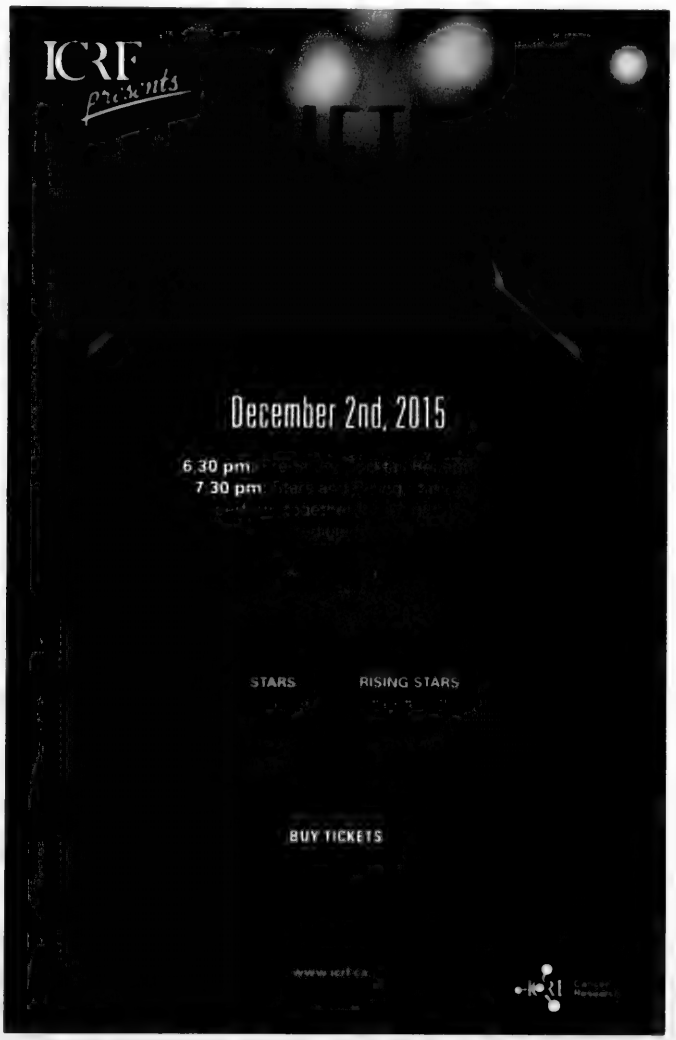

Fauda explores both sides of Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Israeli TV show will be screened by Toronto Jewish Film Festival in three sittings

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Israeli television has been seriously good for a while now, as anyone who's followed the trajectory of homegrown Israeli dramas like *Hatufim*, successfully adapted a year after its 2010 release to the critically-acclaimed American variation, *Homeland*, can attest.

North American viewers should therefore be taking note of the latest political thriller to make serious waves in Israel, both for its high quality and unique subject matter.

Fauda, which Torontonians will have a chance to watch over the course of three screenings – the first held Nov. 15 – at Innis Town Hall and presented by the Toronto Jewish Film Festival in partnership with the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies, is being hailed as the first Israeli drama to explore both the Israeli and Palestinian experience of the regional conflict.

Written and developed by Lior Raz (who also plays the show's protagonist, Doron) and Avi Issacharoff, *Fauda*, which premiered in Israel in February, is about an elite, undercover counter-terrorist unit in the Israel Defence Forces that frequently poses as Arabs and undertakes covert military operations in the West Bank.

Immersed in Arabic and Palestinian culture and mores, the team, which the premiere season's 12 episodes are centred on, endeavours to find and kill the seemingly indomitable Hamas terrorist, Abu Ahmad, or "the Panther," played by Palestinian Israeli actor Hisham Suliman.

Specifically, the focus falls on the team's commander, Doron, who has been wooed back to the unit, largely by his own demons, from a brief foray into civilian life.

The show follows as he forgoes the fragile domestic life he's built and devotes all he has to trying to defeat Abu Ahmad, the man it was widely believe he'd killed 18 months prior.

What's most compelling about *Fauda* (which translates, in Arabic, to "chaos") is that the personal challenges and tragedies of Doron and the men in his unit – who are, not surprisingly, revealed to be far more entwined in their various dramas and betrayals than first meets the eye – are shown alongside those of Abu Ahmad and his tight-knit network of family, supporters and friends.

While frankly it seems bizarre, not to mention long-overdue, that an Israeli program hasn't until now showcased the other side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, *Fauda* has been lauded for its extensive use of Arabic (the show is fairly evenly split where Hebrew and Arabic language are concerned) and portrayal of Hamas operatives, and their families as complex and, often, compassionate human beings coping with their own internal struggles and desires to protect those they love.

Though overall it still skews towards emphasizing the Israeli characters' lives in greater detail – and with greater nuance – a number of the Palestinian characters are finely drawn and deeply empathetic.

Lior Raz plays the show's protagonist.

Abu Ahmad's sister-in-law, for example, who watches while her new husband is gunned down before her eyes in the midst of their wedding celebration, is extremely sympathetic to behold as she transforms from a hopeful and eminently vital young woman in love to one overtaken by anger, hopelessness and grief.

The violent actions she subsequently takes are depicted more than anything as heartrending, as opposed to enraging.

Then there's Shirin, the Palestinian doctor and cousin of Abu Ahmad's right hand man, who is unwittingly drawn into the web of duplicity and violence as, beneath the double-dealing, a kernel of authentic connection is forged between her and Doron.

Even Abu Ahmad himself is positioned, in many ways, in a sympathetic light, the fierce love he has for his family frequently highlighted.

A scene wherein he and his wife – who his underground life has long kept him separate from – are reunited, is affecting to some extent although here the script would have benefited from some stronger, more imaginative writing and greater depth.

Ultimately, *Fauda* delivers insofar as, in many ways, it exposes the fluidity and the fissures of the boundaries, both physical and social, that have been erected between Palestinians and Israelis: Doron's unit simply need put on different clothes and switch to Arabic and they are taken for Palestinians.

The reverse is shown when a Palestinian character takes her hair down, dons a pair of tight jeans and easily passes as an Israeli woman in a Tel Aviv bar.

In this way, *Fauda* makes sure the tragic irony of two peoples who are at once wretchedly divided and closely related, is keenly felt, regardless of one's politics. ■

Message to CJN Snowbirds
Spending all or part of the winter outside of Canada?
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Local authors featured at Jewish Book Festival

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Gail Benick

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Keeping in sync with some 300 Jewish community centres across North America that have designated November as Jewish Book Month, Toronto's Prosserman JCC and the Schwartz/Reisman Centre in Vaughan are presenting the third annual Jewish Book Festival, Nov. 15 to 29.

Thirteen newly published books are being celebrated at both locations in 15 days. What evidently makes the Toronto-area festival unique is the preponderance of local authors being highlighted, such as Alison Pick, whose rousing, high-profile memoir *Between Gods* won a Canadian Jewish Literary Award last month.

Several other of the local authors have also written on the Holocaust, a theme that was all but ignored for the first two decades of the postwar era but has increasingly come to dominate Jewish literary culture ever since.

Mordechai Ronen, a Holocaust survivor and veteran of the Israel Defence Forces discusses his memoir, *I Am a Victor*, co-written with Steve Paikin of TVO's *The Agenda*.

Also, Eli Rubenstein, director of March of the Living Canada, makes a presentation on his book *Witness: Passing the Torch of Holocaust Memory to New Generations*; (see page 44) and Gail Benick discusses *The Girl Who Was Born That Way*, a book about a Jewish family that tried to bury its Holocaust past.

Toronto-based television news correspondent Martin Fletcher makes a return visit to the festival to discuss *The War Reporter*, a book about his journalistic experiences in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Serbia; and Torontonian Isme Bennie recounts the experience of growing up Jewish in South Africa in *White Schooldays: Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa*.

Festival director Gustavo Rymberg and committee chair Sara Dobner worked for six months to organize the festival, which also features book sales and involves partnerships with various community organizations and retirement homes.

"We started working on this in May," Rymberg said. "We attended the conference of the Jewish Book Council in New York and we met with 254 new authors. It was a good opportunity to meet them and to decide if their books would be of interest to our community."

The festival opens with a presentation by Joshua Muravchik on his book *Making David into Goliath: How the World Turned Against Israel*, which traces the trends that shaped world opinion on Israel from 1967 to today and the new paradigm of leftist orthodoxy that turned the table against Israel. (Schwartz/Reisman, Nov. 15, 10 a.m.)

Other authors and books being celebrated are: Katja Goldman and Lisa Rotmil and their cooking book *The Community Table*; Leah Lax's book *Uncovered, How I Left Hasidic Life and Finally Came Home*; Robin Berman's *Permission to Parent, How to Raise Your Child with Love and Limits*; and Jessamyn Hope's novel *Safekeeping*.

There are two free events for kids: Laura Gehl presents her children's book *Hare and Tortoise Race Across Israel*; and Anna Levine presents *Jodie's Shabbat Surprise*, about a dog that stumbles upon an archeological find near Jerusalem.

The Ventanas Trio performs a free closing concert featuring an energetic fusion of flamenco, Sephardic, North African, Balkan, Turkish and Greek influences. (Schwartz/Reisman Center, Nov. 29, 7 p.m.)

Tickets for paid events are $5. The festival schedule is accessible via its website, http://welcome.srcentre.ca/books/ ■

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Isolation and loneliness inherent in late filmmaker's work

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Belgian filmmaker Chantal Akerman was 24, she wrote and directed an ambitious, nearly 3-1/2-hour film. It had an unruly title: *Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*. The drama focused on the long, dull, monotonous days of a bored French housekeeper, played by Delphine Seyrig.

The response to *Jeanne Dielman* was polarized. The long takes, slow pace and repetitive plotting inflamed audiences. Critics, on the other hand, championed the drama. The *Village Voice* would later name it one of the 20 best films of the 20th century.

Today, many film schools would be incomplete without showing *Jeanne Dielman*, or another of the director's films. Akerman's work is challenging to watch, often filled with languid plotting and ambiguous characters, but it is always thematically rich. Many of the stories focus on people, both real and fictional, living in exile.

That isolation and loneliness inherent to many of her best films is especially bitter to recall in the wake of Akerman's death on Oct. 5. She died of a suicide at the age of 65. It was less than a month after her final film, *No Home Movie*, premiered at the Toronto film festival.

No Home Movie will also screen at this year's Montreal International Documentary Festival (RIDM). With Akerman's death still lingering in the minds of film fans, RIDM organizers are paying tribute to the late filmmaker.

Chantal Akerman COURTESY RIDM

> *Today, many film schools would be incomplete without showing* Jeanne Dielman

Alongside Akerman's final film, the festival will also have the North American premiere of *I Don't Belong Anywhere*, a biographical film of the late Jewish filmmaker.

RIDM organizers had already planned to show these titles before her sudden death, says festival programmer Bruno Dequen.

"We were working on having Chantal come to Montreal," he says. "We knew maybe mid-summer... that there were troubles in her life. We couldn't talk about it."

I Don't Belong Anywhere, directed by Marianne Lambert, plays in Montreal on Nov. 18 and 19. Akerman's still-topical 2002 documentary *From the Other Side*, about Mexican migrants crossing the U.S. border, will screen Nov. 14.

Meanwhile, *No Home Movie* (screening on Nov. 15 and 20) is one of the filmmaker's only works to deal with aspects of her Jewish identity. (The title *No Home Movie* has a double meaning, also referring to how the filmmaker felt like she had no home at all.)

The doc is a portrait of the last months in the life of Akerman's mother, Nelly, a Polish Jew who was a survivor of Auschwitz and later suffered from chronic anxiety. (Akerman's father also survived the Holocaust.)

In the documentary, Akerman tries to find out more about her mother's harrowing experiences, knowing that time is fleeting.

"It's never in your face in Akerman's work," Dequen says of the filmmaker's Judaism. "[*No Home Movie*] might be the first time ever that she's really trying to ask those questions. Her mom is not the most talkative person... but Akerman keeps asking those questions."

Akerman's thorny relationship with her mother is a key facet in her early films. The 1977 doc *News From Home* consists of letters Nelly wrote to her daughter when Akerman moved to New York, recited via voice-over.

"They don't really talk all that much, but you can feel that she's always thinking about her mom," Dequen says of that relationship in *No Home Movie*, although the statement could also apply to *News From Home*.

Meanwhile, the passive mother (and title character) of *Jeanne Dielman* was considered to be a representation of Nelly – a creative decision the director later admitted was ungrateful on her part.

With her unconventional techniques and explorations of lesbian and feminist themes, Akerman's work has influenced countless artists and filmmakers. Directors like Claire Denis, Gus van Sant and Todd Haynes all wrote eulogies in the wake of her death in October.

Still, Akerman's films continue to find an audience. Besides the tribute at RIDM and the new documentary, a retrospective of her work recently played at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London.

That's not bad for a filmmaker whose works elicited boos from film festival crowds 40 years ago. Regardless, the screenings at RIDM are guaranteed to get rousing applause, in memory of one daring, powerful, singular artist. ■

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Women are central characters in book on Bible stories

MARTIN LOCKSHIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Like it or not, the Bible is a male book. The authors of the biblical books were most likely men. The expected audience is male, too. For example, as Prof. Judith Plaskow once pointed out, when Moses turns to "the people" just before the giving of the Torah, and instructs them "Do not go near a woman" (Exodus 19:15), obviously "the people" he is addressing are the men.

Michal Lemberger, who has taught the Bible as literature at several American universities, contributes to the growing number of women-friendly versions of biblical stories with her first book, *After Abel and Other Stories*.

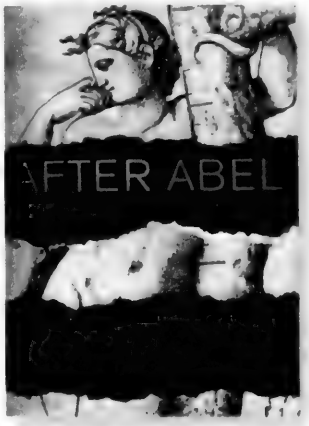
Each story has a biblical woman at its centre, sometimes a famous woman like Eve or Miriam, at other times less well-known characters, such as Zeresh (Haman's wife) or Peninah (more on her below). Sometimes the stories are written in the voice of a biblical woman, but even when they are not, they centre on a woman or women. In *The Watery Season*, Hagar is the central character, and our matriarch, Sarah, is referred to only as "her mistress." Abraham is simply "the old man," a bold twist on the Bible's habit of omitting the names of women characters.

Some of the stories explore the marriage of a man to two wives, one who is beloved while the other produces babies. This type of ancient ménage à trois interested the classical rabbis, too; they portrayed it disparagingly as a sign of a corrupt society. (See for example Rashi's commentary to Genesis 4:19.) Lemberger's chapter "Shiloh" rewrites the biblical story of the marriage of Elkanah to both Hannah and Peninah.

In the biblical account (I Samuel 1-2), Elkanah's wife Peninah had many children while Hannah was barren. Elkanah "loved" or preferred Hannah. Hannah, however, was not satisfied with this role; she wanted to be a mother. She prayed to God for a child and vowed that she would return the child to God if her prayer was fulfilled. Her prayer was answered with the birth of her son, Samuel. She took care of him until he weaned and then handed him over to the care of Eli, the head of the shrine in Shiloh. God rewarded Hannah and she subsequently gave birth to three more sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, Samuel grew up in Shiloh, took over from Eli, and became a venerated leader of Israel.

In Lemberger's version, told in the voice of Peninah (who never speaks in the Bible), a very different story emerges. Peninah had grown up in a polygamous home where the wives got along and worked happily together. When she was told that she was to become the second wife in the home of the childless Hannah and Elkanah, she was hopeful that she would also find sorority with her co-wife, but she was roundly disappointed. Beautiful Hannah and Elkanah had what appeared to be a deeply caring relationship, while plain Jane Peninah was the lonely "breeder," who produced children for Elkanah but could establish no deep relationship with him and even less so with Hannah. In this story too, Hannah eventually gives birth to a son to whom she is, not surprisingly, extremely devoted. But Elkanah is unhappy about having to share Hannah's affection with their son and the baby's life appears in danger. Hannah hands her son over to the care of the authorities in Shiloh to ensure his safety and to save her marriage.

Lemberger's Elkanah is a narcissistic, moody, inconsiderate male and, in fact, hardly any of the men in the book are positive characters. The exception is Palti ben Laish, to whom the Bible dedicates three verses (I Samuel 25:44 and II Samuel 3:15-16). In the Bible, he never speaks, but Lemberger gives his story a 50-page chapter, much of it in his voice. In another telling contrast with the original, Lemberger omits Hannah's devotion to God, and indeed removes the divine from most of the stories.



After Abel and Other Stories, *by Michal Lemberger*

(Prospect Park Books)

> *This book is not Bible commentary. Reading it will not give readers new insights into the Bible stories.*

This book is not Bible commentary. Reading it will not give readers new insights into the Bible stories. Can it be called midrash? Dara Horn, a popular author who is quoted on the book's website, thinks so: "This is a beautiful book of modern midrash – the ancient Jewish tradition of telling the stories between the Hebrew Bible's lines." A reviewer in *Lilith* magazine goes further: "Calling the biblically themed stories in the new collection by Michal Lemberger midrashim is like calling champagne a carbonated beverage." Actually, calling the stories in this book midrashim is like calling a bicycle a carbonated beverage.

While midrashim may considerably expand a biblical story, often surprising us by reading so much between the lines that we hardly recognize the story, they never erase central parts of biblical stories. When Lemberger's Sodom goes up in flames without divine involvement, the story cannot qualify as midrash.

Yet the book is riveting and well-written. It's a collection of riffs on the Bible that will be enjoyable for those who know their Bible, who are sympathetic to women's perspectives, and who are willing to look beyond the desacralizing liberties taken by the author in order to savour the unusual experience of seeing ancient women at the centre of the action. ■

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P.S. Jerusalem explores the many moods of Israel

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Documentarian Danae Elon has a very complicated relationship with Israel. She has fond memories of her childhood in Jerusalem. When away from the country, she misses the vast desert just outside of the city. At the same time, she disagrees with many of the policies of the Israeli government, believing their actions do not represent her Jewish values.

"I was, like many Israelis, suffocated in my own environment," she says of her adolescence there.

At 20, after completing her army service, Elon left Israel for film school at New York University. Regardless, the creative path she walked along only led her back to Jerusalem.

Her newest film, *P.S. Jerusalem*, chronicles a more than three-year period when Elon moved back to the Holy City, with her husband, two sons and a baby on the way.

P.S. Jerusalem chronicles more than three years. COURTESY OF TIFF

After bids in Haifa, southern Israel and Toronto, *P.S. Jerusalem* will screen at the Montreal International Documentary Festival (RIDM) on Nov. 17 and 21. Elon, who now lives with her family in Montreal, will be in attendance.

Throughout the doc, Elon points her camera at her eldest boy, Tristan. In Jerusalem, he attended the bilingual Hand in Hand school, where Jewish and Arab children study together.

In *P.S. Jerusalem*, Tristan groans when his mother points her camera his way. Nevertheless, many of his responses to things such as learning Arabic and pondering over whether or not he is Jewish are spontaneous and fascinating to watch.

"I want my kids to have an identity that is clear," Elon tells *The CJN*, "and be able to understand their sense of history, of who they are and where they come from."

While the film features the director asking Tristan and younger brother Andrei a lot of questions, she hoped the experience would provide answers to the things her children would ask her.

In one scene, Tristan learns about the "Nakba," the displacement of Palestinians in 1948. Elon narrates that nobody spoke about that when she was a student.

Elon says the decision to film her sons was not easy, and this caused some tension between the family members.

"You basically have to speak to them in a certain way so they understand you as a person and as a mom, and then ultimately you will manage to extract the information [you want]," she says.

"Just ask the questions so they can be curious. [Tristan] doesn't know what Israel and Palestine is. But he does know that his friend from school lives very far in the desert."

The director's move back to Israel went against the wishes of her father, outspoken Israeli writer Amos Elon, who died in 2009. Amos moved away from Jerusalem with his wife in 2004 to live the rest of his days in Italy.

Amos pleaded with his daughter not to return. However, Elon says she never quite felt at home anywhere else.

Growing up with a distinguished author in her home, as well as one that frequently criticized Israel, meant that Elon was exposed to a multitude of political opinions.

"My father was a very inquisitive man," she says. "We were always on. We always had to think about what we were saying and why we were saying it."

Elon's third child, born in Jerusalem a few months after the family's arrival, was named Amos, in his late grandfather's honour.

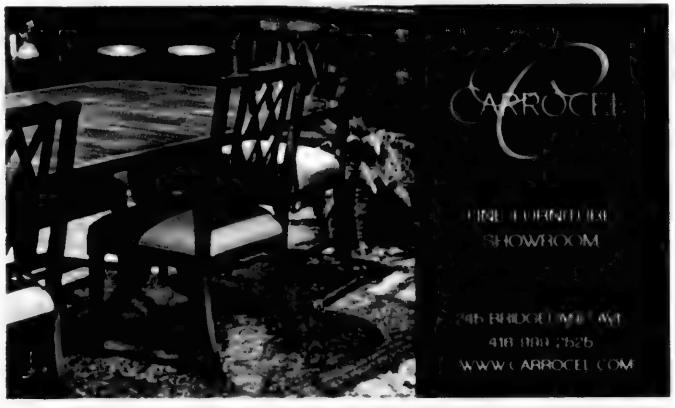
P.S. Jerusalem explores Israel in its many moods, from peaceful Memorial Day ceremonies to encounters with xenophobic men on the city streets.

The doc was filmed with a Canadian crew, under the supervision of Montreal producer Paul Cadieux. Elon credits the extra Canadian funding as a vital factor in making her film. She is now working with Cadieux on another Jerusalem-set doc.

Elon says she is intrigued about speaking with the audience after the RIDM screenings. The film already stirred up some controversy in Toronto, when some criticized the film for being too pro-Palestinian. In comparison, she says that festival audiences in Israel were more receptive.

The director says that people who attack her film for its politics miss the point.

"We should be able to look at stories and... see films, and not judge them on political terms," Elon says. "I think you can actually experience it profoundly, even if you don't agree with it politically." ■



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When life hands you lemons

SUE EPSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The son-in-law of one of my good friends is a lemon farmer here in Israel, and I have often been lucky enough to be the recipient of large quantities of lemons. So what do I do with all those lemons? I zest and juice them and freeze the juice in one-cup portions in small freezer bags. I also keep one or two whole lemons in the freezer to grate over chicken dishes or salads.

To make lemon zest, simply grind up the coloured portion of a lemon peel or thinly slice it using a sharp knife or a peeler. Be sure to avoid the white pith underside, which is bitter and will give whatever food it's added to an unpleasant aftertaste. If you're having trouble peeling the rind or plan to make a lot of lemon zest, you can pick up a tool called a zester to help.

Picking good lemons isn't hard. They should be bright yellow in colour, firm to the touch, smooth and heavier than you might expect considering their size. (Chilling lemons makes them harder to juice and zest, but you can roll one back and forth with your palm on the counter, as you would a rolling pin, or pop it into the microwave for a few seconds to release the juice and soften the rind, making it easier to squeeze.)

Aside from the usual lemon pie, lemon squares, lemonade, etc., lemons are the key flavouring in countless recipes, and are almost as indispensable as salt for seasoning and enhancing dishes. Sometimes I'm asked what is in a dish that I've made – a delicious taste that they can't quite put their finger on. It's very often lemon. Adding lemon juice or zest can change the flavour and add extra zing to a dish.

Here are some excellent ways to use lemons:

• When cooking fish or chicken, place slices of lemon under it in the pan. It will add flavour and keep the fish or chicken from sticking.

• Replace vinegar with lemon juice in your home-made salad dressings (usually 3 tbsp. of lemon juice to 1 tbsp. of oil).

• Use lemon juice to marinate meat, poultry and fish. Use anywhere from 1 tbsp. to 1/4 cup lemon juice for marinades, depending on how much meat you use, how tender you want it to be, and how strong you want the lemon flavour to be. Allow poultry to marinate for 30 minutes to about four or five hours. Chicken is less dense than beef and it can usually pick up flavour within the first 30 minutes to an hour. Do not marinate fish any longer than 60 minutes.

• Serve fluffier rice by adding lemon juice to the water as it cooks. Boil the rice in water and squeeze in 1 tsp. to 3 tbsp. of lemon juice. If you want the fluffiness lemon juice provides while minimizing the amount of lemon taste that comes through, stick with 1 tsp. of juice.

• Add lemon juice in toward the end of the cooking process to prevent loss of flavour.

• Add a drop of lemon juice to your ice cube trays. Halve a fresh lemon, then squeeze it into the water when you refill your ice cube trays. A few hours later, you'll have the perfect addition to any cool drink.

• Squeeze into soups, sauces, drinks. Bake into cakes, muffins and add to anything that contains mayonnaise.

Lemon-pistachio Israeli couscous

Based on a recipe by David Lebovitz, this is a delicious and unusual side dish.

- 1 lemon, fresh or preferably preserved
- 1/2 cup chopped, fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tbsp. salted or unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup diced dried fruit (any combination of cherries, cranberries, apricots, prunes or raisins)
- 1/2 cup unsalted (shelled) pistachios, very coarsely chopped (almost whole)
- 3/4 tsp. sea salt or kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 1/4 cups Israeli couscous or another small round pasta

Finely dice the lemon and discard seeds. Place in a bowl along with the parsley, butter, dried fruit, pistachios, salt and cinnamon.

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the couscous and cook according to the package instructions. Drain and add it to the bowl of fruits and nuts, stirring until the butter is melted and all the ingredients are well mixed. Season with black pepper and serve. Makes 4-6 servings. ■

There are no faint hearts in Fort Worth, Texas

MICHAEL STAVSKY
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It's only 10:30 a.m. and the thermometer reads 40 C. Standing in the shade of a tall tree provides minimal relief on this cloudless morning. Several large fans blessedly blow mist nearby, ever so slightly taking the edge off the heat.

While downing countless water bottles, my family and I stand alongside a cobblestone street in Fort Worth, Texas, as the crowd begins to build around us. Lined up along the sides of East Exchange Street, people of all ages and backgrounds come to the Fort Worth Stockyards to watch the Fort Worth cattle drive. This vestige of the Old West repeats itself twice daily, much as it has for over a century.

With cameras and phones at the ready, several hundred people have come to witness the spectacle, oblivious to the scorching heat. At promptly 11 a.m., we're ushered onto the curb by Fort Worth police in 10-gallon cowboy hats, who warn us not to walk out in the street.

Within a few minutes, the crack of whips travelling faster than Mach One can be heard nearby. Ever so slowly, the herd is arriving.

Marching down the street, some 20 steer stay together. These half-ton Texas longhorns are an impressive sight, with sets of horns measuring nearly seven feet across. Responding to commands from cowboys and their whips, the herd passes by and is led back to the holding pen for their march later in the day.

This scene epitomizes Fort Worth. Very appropriately nicknamed Cowtown, the Old West depicted in movies and television shows of yesteryear lives on here. From the downtown mural depicting the legendary Chisholm Trail to circa 1908 Cowtown Coliseum, Fort Worth relishes its historic past.

When visiting Fort Worth, you might expect the city's residents to ride horses and use spittoons. While Old West culture is cherished, the city has embraced modernity without losing its identity. Tree lined streets complement the modern downtown area with remarkable beauty. And while comparisons with nearby Dallas are inevitable, Fort Worth has a solid edge in history and overall appeal.

Endless western wear clothing stores line the streets, some with very high-end designer apparel. The ubiquitous souped up pickup trucks roar along Houston Street every night, oblivious to the racket that can be heard for blocks away. Residents just take it in stride. Chances are they have a loved one that drives a Ford F-150 or the coveted Dodge Ram Texas Edition.

Approaching someone on the street for directions, you're likely to receive a suspicious glare followed by "Can I help you?" in a deep Texas drawl. In a place that flies its state flag from every possible corner, and school children recite the pledge of allegiance to the flag of Texas every morning, initial suspicion of outsiders is hardly surprising.

What we found, was, initial greetings aside, Texans quickly warm to visitors with genuine southern hospitality.

Our visit included a stay at the Hilton Fort Worth. Formerly known as the Hotel Fort Worth, it was here that former U.S. president John F. Kennedy spent his final night, prior to his assassination in nearby Dallas the following day. During a speech given in front of the hotel that rainy morning in November 1963, Kennedy remarked "There are no faint hearts in Fort Worth." A statue of Kennedy and memorial to his legacy stand in the spot where he stood that morning.

The memorial to slain U.S. president John F. Kennedy MICHAEL STAVSKY PHOTO

Visiting Billy Bob's Texas – the World's Largest Honky Tonk is a surprising amount of fun. Occupying several buildings adjacent to the historic Stockyards, Billy Bob's offers mechanical bull riding, endless pool tables, arcade games and is even a concert venue. Country music acts regard playing at Billy Bob's as akin to playing the Grand Ole Opry. Dozens of country music stars have lent handprint moulds that grace the walls of the entrance area.

Of course, being the gateway to the Old West means that Fort Worth has a legendary rodeo. Every week, cowboys from all over North America descend on the Coliseum to compete in bull riding and steer roping competitions. The competitive nature of these events, along with cash prizes, entices participants to lay it all on the line while risking life and limb. These daredevils are often carried out with broken bones while seeking their eight seconds of fame.

Fans that appreciate a little less excitement will enjoy Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show. With its roots in Wild Bill Hickok's show of the same name that toured North America and Europe over a century ago, Pawnee Bill delights fans with shooting competitions, horseback riding and lassoing events.

With much to experience, Fort Worth offers a rare glimpse into a past that's very much alive in the hearts of many Americans. ■

Michael Stavsky acknowledges the assistance of the Fort Worth Convention and Visitor's Bureau in arranging his family's trip to Fort Worth.

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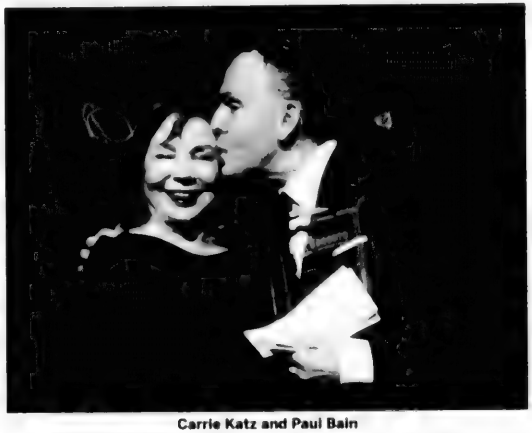

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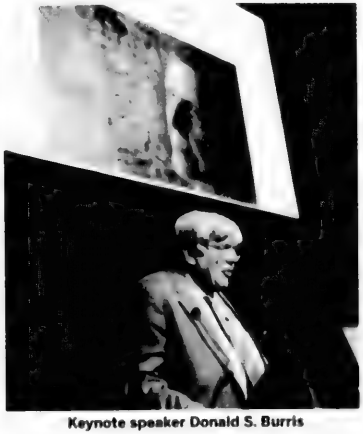

Keynote speaker Donald S. Burris

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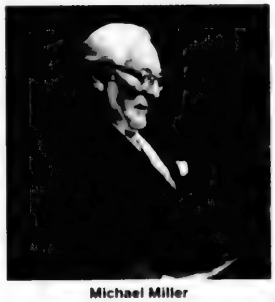
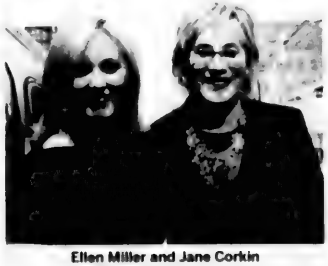


Michael Miller

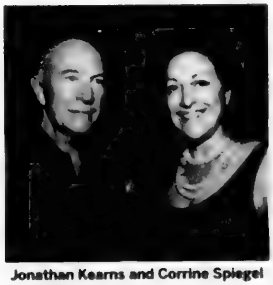
ORT Toronto Gala

"Unfinished Business of the 20th Century" was the theme of ORT Toronto's recent gala honouring Paul E. Bain, partner at Dickinson Wright LLP, for his work protecting artists' rights and his dedication to several not-for-profit art organizations. Janis and Kenny Finkelstein received the ORT Recognition Award for their many years of dedication to the organization. Donald S. Burris, a senior partner in the Los Angeles firm Burris, Schoenberg & Walden LLP, and one of the men behind the *Woman in Gold* case, spoke about other cases he has worked on rescuing stolen art. Funds raised will be donated to United Israel Appeal of Canada and designated for the Be'er Sheva College of Technology in Israel. ■ – *The Socialite*

Lynda Pancer, Joyce Chapnick and Betty Klimitz



Ellen Miller and Jane Corkin



Jonathan Kearns and Corrine Spiegel

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What's New

NOV. 12 - NOV. 19

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Nov. 12

SIGD AND CHANUKAH
Learn about the Jewish Ethiopian holiday of Sigd and Chanukah, 7 p.m., Congregation Darchei Noam. Enjoy crafts and Ethiopian snacks. $5/$7.

IN CONVERSATION
Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich speaks with author **David Bezmozgis,** 7:30 p.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue.

CANADIAN PENSION PLAN
Mark Wiseman, manager of the CPP portfolio, speaks at 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Synagogue. $15/$20. Register at www.adathisrael.com

BOOK CLUB
Cathy Tile reviews *An Officer and a Spy.* 1 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $10.

RABBI LURIA
Aaron Nussbaum discusses "Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Ari Hakodesh," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

VE'AHAVTA'S GALA
Ve'ahavta honours community leaders at a dinner with performances by Shad, Jaffa Road and Digging Roots, 6 p.m., Koerner Concert Hall. For tickets, www.veahavta.org or 416-964-7698.

OPERA FROM A JEWISH VIEW
Jerry Fink discusses "Opera from a Jewish perspective," 11 a.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $10/$15.

Friday, Nov. 13

JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL
Temple Sinai holds its annual Renaissance Film Festival this weekend. Advance registration only. $95/$120. 416-487-4161.

ZIONISM AND REFORM JUDAISM
Rabbi Nir Barkin discusses "120 years of Zionism and its impact on today's Israeli Reform Judaism," 8 p.m., Temple Emanu-El.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Nov. 26 is Nov. 16. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Friendship Circle

The Friendship Circle, which pairs teen volunteers with children and teens with special needs in social, Judaic and recreational programs, held its volunteer orientation session last month. From left, in the photo on the left are Aaron Spivak, Ori Feldman, Aaron Subel and Zac Schenker; and on the right, Sydney Serfaty, Jenna Segal, Rachel Herman and Bailey Stern.

Saturday, Nov. 14

DEAD END
A live performance of the play *Dead End* will be presented at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, 8 p.m. $36/$18. **Miriam,** 416-789-3213.

JEWISH-ABORIGINAL ENCOUNTERS
David Koffman, professor of Jewish Studies at York University, discusses "Jewish-Aboriginal encounters," Shabbat morning at Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

ISRAEL AND THE REFORM MOVEMENT
Rabbi Nir Barkin discusses challenges and opportunities for the Reform movement in Israel, 9 a.m. Temple Kol Ami.

CARLEBACH EVENING
Congregation Beth Avraham Yosef of Toronto hosts a Shlomo Carlebach evening of songs and stories, 8:30 p.m. $10.

Sunday, Nov. 15

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM
Rabbi Gilad Kariv discusses "Religious pluralism in Israel: Mission Impossible?' 10 a.m., Temple Har Zion. RSVP debbiemoldofsky@templeharzion.com

REMEMBERING I.L. PERETZ
Eugene Orenstein discusses (in Yiddish) "I.L. Peretz: the architect of modern Yiddish culture," 11 a.m. Workmen's Circle Centre, 471 Lawrence Ave. W.

TEA WITH A TWIST
Canadian Friends of Israel Elwyn holds an afternoon tea with a modern twist, 2-4 p.m., Holland Bloorview Conference Centre, 150 Kilgour Rd. $36. For tickets, call **Patricia,** 416-649-1655.

JUSTICE TO MERCY TO LOVE
Sara Horowitz discusses "From justice to mercy to love: Solomon's wisdom and women's intuition," 7:30 p.m., First Narayever Congregation.

MAKE YOUR OWN HAVDALAH SET
Create your own havdalah set, 1-3 p.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue.

Monday, Nov. 16

FALL LECTURE SERIES
Mike Daley discusses "Frank Sinatra: the man, the music, the legend," 2 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $15. 416-449-3880.

EATING DISORDERS RESEARCH
Dr. Allen Kaplan discusses "Recent brain and treatment research on eating disorders," 7 p.m., Temple Sinai.

KABBALAH NIGHTS
Bnei Baruch Congregation presents an information session on Kabbalah, 7 p.m., Northern District Library, 40 Orchard View Blvd. For more information, 416-840-5487 or info@kabbalahtoronto.com. Other info sessions on Nov. 30, Dec. 7 at the same location.

Tuesday, Nov. 17

LUNCH AND LEARN
Jonathan Halevi discusses "How the Islamic State (ISIS) threatens Canada and the West," Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

Avery Saltzman discusses "The role of Jewish theatre in our culture," noon, Beth Sholom Synagogue. $18. RSVP 416-783-6103.

Paper Moon (**Zoe Adams** and **Tony Quarrington**) perform at National Council of Jewish Women, seniors' lunch and learn program, noon, 4700 Bathurst St. $9. RSVP 416-633-5100.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

FRIENDS OF LANIADO
Canadian Friends of Laniado Hospital holds its annual general meeting, 8 p.m. Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue RSVP friends@laniadocanada.com

CAMP AIM FUNDRAISER
Camp Aim, which operates Jewish camps for children with special needs, holds a fundraiser, at the Steam Whistle Brewery, 7 p.m., dinner, brewery tour and entertainment. For tickets, call 647-300-0985

BOOK CLUB
Marilyn Herbert reviews *All the Light We Cannot See*, 8 p.m. Adath Israel Synagogue. $10/$15. **Beverley**, 416-499-6920.

Wednesday, Nov. 18

HOOKING 101
The Pomegranate Guild for Jewish Textiles offers a workshop on rug hooking, 7:30 p.m., Congregation Darchei Noam. For more information, visit pomegranateguild.ca or darcheinoam.ca

Thursday, Nov. 19

IS ISLAM A RELIGION OF PEACE?
Liyakat Takim, professor at McMaster University, discusses "Is Islam really a religion of peace?" 7:30 p.m., Temple Har Zion.

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GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.
- **Living with teens:** A 6-session group for parents of teenagers. Starts Nov. 16. Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St., 7:30 p.m.
- **When you're about to separate, what to tell the kids:** A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation, Nov. 18. Lebovic JCC, 9:30 a.m.
- **Living with adult ADHD:** A 4-session group for adults who have been diagnosed with ADD or ADHD and want to learn strategies to create positive change in their lives. Starts Nov. 25, 7 p.m. at Lipa Green Centre.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Nov. 19, 26, **Jonno Lightstone** discusses "Big band jazz," with live music, 1-3 p.m.; Nov. 19, social games club, play bridge, mah-jong or other games, 11 a.m RSVP 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or lisar@mnjcc.org.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9; Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.: exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526, or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Nov. 17, **Robert Shechter** discusses "The Channel islands," 10 a.m.; Nov. 19, wellness lecture on "The hygiene hypothesis," 1:30 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; live entertainment Nov. 18, 2 p.m.; creative circle Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., bring your handiwork.
- **Association of Jewish Seniors:** Home fire safety with **Denise Hynes**, Nov. 19, 9:30 a.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. RSVP 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **National Council of Jewish Women-Aviva chapter** is looking for senior women who would like to join, 416-633-5100.
- **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. 416-256-1892.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. **Judi**, 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom Synagogue.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth Synagogue.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion.** Wednesdays, play bridge at 9:30 a.m.; mah-jong at 1 p.m.; Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge, mah-jong and canasta, Thursdays, 1:30-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **Beth Sholom Synagogue.** Creative exercise, lunch and cards, Wednesdays at noon. 416-783-6103.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.
- Screening of *24 Days*, Nov. 22, 7 p.m.
- "A Taste of Jazz," presented by the Royal Conservatory of Music, Nov. 17, 1 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Van Gogh and Gauguin, friendship, rivalry and tragedy," Nov. 17-Dec.1, 1 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "A look at Jewish comedy in movies," Wednesdays till Nov. 25, 1 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org
- *Portraits of Resilience*, photos of Holocaust survivors by **Elliot Sylman**, is on display at the gallery until Nov. 26.
- Fall supper club for young adults with developmental disabilities, Wednesdays till Nov. 18, 4-8:30 p.m Ext. 330
- *State of Women* is at the Al Green Theatre, Nov. 11-16, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. www.algreentheatre.ca
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities. Sundays to Dec. 6, 1 p.m.
- Shabbat family party, spaces still available, Fridays, 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Ext. 388
- Mindfulness-based stress reduction workshop Nov. 15. Ext. 574.
- Kat-Ka team, with Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror for children in grades 2-8, Nov. 29, 1-3:30 p.m. RSVP: shaliach.gesher@gmail.com.
- Sipur Yeladim – bedtime stories in Hebrew for kids age 3-6 and their families, Nov. 15, 4:30 p.m. Ext. 321
- Jewish mindfulness – adult education, Nov. 29, 9:30 a.m. RSVP principal@djcs.org
- Wheel dance: learn Latin dance in a mixed abilities class. Sundays to Dec. 6, 6 p.m. Ext. 330
- Postnatal spin class, for mothers and pre-mobile babies, Mondays 10:30 a.m Ext. 567
- Open community choir, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. with **Gillian Stecyk**. No experience or audition required.
- Everyday Friends: social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Ext. 330.
- **Iain Scott** discusses "Four of the greatest scenes from opera," Nov. 16, 23, 1:30 p.m
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. For programs, ext. 3025.
- Free breakfast Nov. 13 at VIVA Thornhill Woods. Pre-registration required.
- Intermediate mah-jong starts Nov. 24, 10:30 a.m. ■

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SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

The role of the substitute decision-maker

Dr. Michael Gordon

It is a recurring theme: A family member, usually one of the children assigned by the parent as the substitute decision-maker (SDM), appears to the professional staff to be "taking over" decisions in a way contrary to the patient's wishes as currently or previously expressed.

An example is a patient with a serious stroke, the latest in a series of them, who has a feeding tube inserted by her SDM children. After the event, a clearly written advance directive or "living will" is found, and it stated clearly that she would not want a permanent artificial feeding tube. Despite that clear directive, the family manages through legal means to keep the feeding tube in place: an apparent contradiction between the parent's expressed wishes and their belief systems.

A more common scenario is seen when a frail elderly person is admitted to a rehabilitation unit following a fall that led to a fracture or after a severe, potentially life-threatening medical illness and the family feels that he or she needs a "more protected" environment. With that in mind, they take it upon themselves to seek arrangements to have a parent admitted to a protected living environment, without necessarily consulting the parent.

If the parent is apprised of the proposed plans and refuses to co-operate, the SDM may forge ahead, trying to make the plans despite the parent's refusal. If a member of staff explains to the SDMs that they cannot make such plans without the parent's consent, the SDMs may accuse the health-care professional of acting un-professionally and may use terms such as: "I am the SDM and therefore I am in charge of decision-making."

They may use terms such as: "I have to protect my mother, and the fact that she objects should not matter as *I am now in charge*."

What many SDMs do not realize, even when it's explained to them, is that being an SDM only comes into effect when the person they are appointed to act for is deemed to be "incompetent" or incapable of making such a decision. For that to be determined, there is usually a need for some sort of clinically relevant evaluation by a physician knowledgeable in the field of mental and cognitive function who is in a position to certify that the person in question is not capable of a particular level of decision-making.

> *Make sure you know the wishes of your family member and act accordingly*

The current approach is no longer one of universal incapacity, but rather capacity for specific types of decisions. For example, people may not be able to direct their stock portfolio because they no longer "understand and appreciate" the implications and consequences of their decisions (the legal definition) but can decide what they want to eat for breakfast.

The law (in Ontario, the Health-Care Consent Act) provides the rules for who can make decisions, and when an SDM can do so, and also defines the basis of such decisions: previously expressed wishes or preferences if known, or best interests if the patient's previously held beliefs or wishes are unknown.

What the SDM has, in fact, is not the "right" to make the decision, but the "right" to fulfil his or her duty as an SDM – to act according to the law and the expressed wishes or best interests of the patient – not as often erroneously believed, the wishes or beliefs of the SDM, no matter how strong.

For those responsible for health-care decisions, when SDMs do not seem to be following their mandate under the law, one option is to apply for a Consent and Capacity Board hearing in which one result could be the removal of the SDM from that role and the assignment to another suitable and eligible person or the Public Guardian and Trustee.

The message for families is: make sure you know the wishes of your family member and act accordingly, no matter how hard that may be – it is their right and your duty. ■

Mazel Tov!

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Mazel tov to parents Danya & Chris and sister Nora on the new addition, Emma Elizabeth Bridson.

Michal Gordon & Michael Jutan are delighted to announce their engagement!
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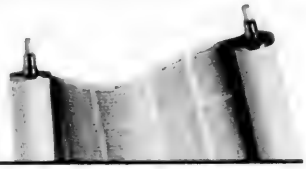
Parshah

Toldot | Genesis 25:19-28:9



Yacov Fruchter explains why kids learn more from their peers than from their teachers
Rabbi Shalom Spira investigates the historical status of prenuptial agreements in Jewish law
Rachael Turkienicz says if we ask God for meaning, we must be prepared to deal with the answer

Yacov Fruchter

"I have learned much from my teachers, and from my friends more than from my teachers." (Ta'anit 7a)

We recently discussed the above text as part of a beit midrash program at Robbins Hebrew Academy where the students explore Jewish texts in a chevrutah (small groups). The 40 grade 6 and 7 students who participated almost unanimously agreed with this statement. They noted that they learn from their teachers "what their teachers want them to know," while they learn from their peers "real life skills and lessons."

Though the existence of group-think and peer pressure is certainly not new, I was surprised by the bluntness with which it was said. Why would an 11-year-old believe she has more to learn "about life" from a fellow 11-year-old with limited life experience, than from someone who was once 11, and since then has had many important life experiences and training in teaching kids? If this is what they truly believe, it highlights the power and importance of peer-led initiatives such as Jewish youth groups and summer camp.

Even Sarah and Rebecca knew about the negative influence of the wrong peers. As we read last week, Sarah demanded that Ishmael be banished so that her precious son, Isaac, would not be influenced by him. This week, Rebecca too is concerned that her beloved Jacob will be bullied and ruled over by his twin brother, Esau. God comforts her, explaining that "the older shall serve the young," or, in other words, Jacob will be able to hold his own.

The challenge for us parents is that we lack the assurance from God that our kids will be OK and withstand negative influences. Being a helicopter parent is not the answer. We have no choice but to teach our kids to be resilient and make good Jewish and moral decisions, and make the most of our opportunities to teach them "real life lessons." ■

Yacov Fruchter is director of community building and spiritual engagement at Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

"Please go to the flock, and take for me from there two good kids" (Genesis 27:9). Citing the Midrash, Rashi places the following ethical justification in Rebecca's mouth: "'They are actually mine.' For so wrote Isaac in her ketubah, that she may collect two goats every day." The matriarch lawfully earned this livestock as her daily culinary allowance.

The enhanced alimony that Rebecca received is offered as a practical halachic option by the Mishnah, Ketubot 101b, which explains that any groom before kiddushin (marriage vows) can voluntarily commit to such an enterprise.

The specific talmudic example involves an agreement to feed one's stepdaughter (who, in the absence of a prenuptial stipulation, would have to support herself, or depend on soup kitchens), but the concept can be transposed to any bride, even if she does not enter marriage with a pre-existing daughter.

Rabbi Jacob Kamenetzky encouraged the Agudath Israel of America to employ precisely such an agreement before every chupah, in order to champion the welfare and prestige of the righteous ladies of Israel. His idea was not implemented with any measure of frequency during his physical lifetime, but is now available with some diamond-polishing on the web.

In 1993, the Beth Din of America capitalized on Rabbi Kamenetzky's proposal by drafting a prenup that requires a husband to pay his wife maintenance for every day after their domestic residence ceases.

However, a recent responsum by Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch (cyber-publicized on Aug. 2) challenges the Beth Din of America's extrapolation, since an agreement to pay the wife after she leaves the home is not necessarily the equivalent of Rebecca's ketubah, which granted her extra money while she remained at home. Presumably, then, the optimal solution to deflect Rabbi Sternbuch's objection would be to employ the formulation on scrib.com. ■

Rabbi Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

This week's parshah, Toldot, describes the birth of Jacob and Esau, twins who will struggle forever. We are so focused on the twins that we miss a crucial moment between their mother, Rebecca, and God. While pregnant, Rebecca demands that God explain why she feels such a struggle within her womb. God reveals that these are not two infants within her, but two nations whose destinies are to reverse their birth order – the elder will serve the younger.

What is crucial about this moment is that Rebecca is the first of our ancestors to initiate an inquiry with God. Previously, our ancestors were given information at God's discretion. Rebecca introduces a foundational concept in Judaism: reach out and start the conversation with God.

But we are also aware that God has answered her question, and perhaps she has too much information. Are we meant to know the destinies of our children? Can they thrive and grow if we channel them toward a preordained path? Can they gain our favour if they choose differently?

Rebecca is in a terrible predicament because God did not specify if this destiny was descriptive or prescriptive – will this happen on its own or must she take action to ensure the outcome? Throughout the lives of her children, Rebecca is silent until one day when Isaac is on his deathbed and intends to bless Esau, the eldest. Knowing this is not their Divine destiny, Rebecca desperately initiates a ruse and disguises Jacob as his brother, Esau. She does not know that the boys have already switched their inheritance rights and she need not take action.

Rebecca teaches us that if we ask God for meaning, we must be prepared to deal with the answer. More importantly, she shows us that the words of God must be interpreted to be understood. Judaism is about a dialogue with God in which we initiate, discuss and interpret. Even the words of God are not absolute. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto.

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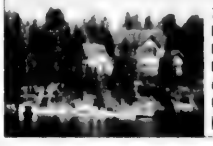

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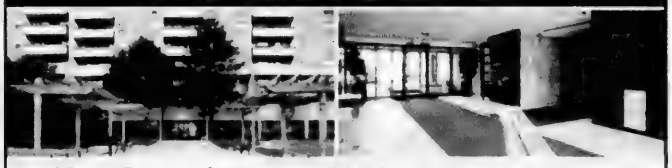

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Dion reiterated Liberals' support for two-state solution

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

In the end it did not help: Coulon lost the Liberal stronghold to Thomas Mulcair, only the second New Democrat MP ever elected in Quebec.

As Liberal leader, Dion reiterated his belief that Canada should restore aid and normal relations with the PA after the dissolution of its Hamas-led government and ascendancy of President Mahmoud Abbas. He was also opposed to extending the Canadian combat mission in Afghanistan beyond what was then a February 2009 limit.

He continued to contend that the Harper government's foreign policy was in step with the Bush administration, which had hurt Canada's reputation on the international stage.

"Canada, despite its long legacy of mediation and expertise in the Middle East, has not even been invited to the table [of a new round of peace talks]. Because what can Canada bring to the table if at present our foreign policy is a carbon copy-in-the-making of American foreign policy?" he said at fundraising dinner for the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations.

Reiterating his party's support for a two-state solution, he said the Liberals "urge all parties in the region to respect international humanitarian law and avoid at all costs the targeting of innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure."

On the other hand, in 2005, Dion, as minister responsible for Parks Canada, oversaw the recognition of the 1919 founding of CJC as an event of national historic significance.

> *"Any threat to Israel's right to exist is an attack on the values of every democracy."*

And although it was implemented by the Harper government, Dion is credited with proposing increased subsidies to enhance the security of religious and other community institutions at risk, which was motivated by the UTT attack.

As party leader, he attended the big Israeli independence day rallies in downtown Montreal.

In 2007, Dion accused then-Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of "inciting another Holocaust" and said the defence of Israel should be the concern of all democracies. "Any threat to Israel's right to exist is an attack on the values of every democracy. Israel's struggle for peace and security is our struggle."

Likewise, combating anti-Semitism should be the concern of all people, he said.

Under Dion, the Liberals voted against the Conservative government's beefing up provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Act, introduced after 9/11. The party's human rights critic, Mount Royal MP Irwin Cotler, however, abstained from the House of Commons vote, saying he favoured the motion, but did not think it provided adequate safeguards against abuse of power.

Despite this break with party ranks, Cotler insisted he and Dion, as former fellow academics, remained good friends.

It was Dion who created the new position of human rights for Cotler within his shadow cabinet. The two collaborated on such issues as combatting the slaughter of innocents in the Darfur region of Sudan.

In more recent years, Cotler and Dion found themselves allies in fending off Conservative accusations made in flyers distributed in areas with significant Jewish residents in 2009 and later during the 2011 federal election.

The Conservatives insinuated that the Liberals were ready to deal with Hamas and were complicit in such anti-Semitic forums as the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa.

The flyer charged that Dion "personally demanded that Canada increase funding to the Hamas-led [Palestinian Authority.]"

Dion rose in the House of Commons to defend his leadership, stating, "The Liberal Party never supported that funds would be sent to the Hamas-led [Palestinian] government. What we were asking was whether the funds would reach the people of Palestine. This point of view was the point of view of the government of Israel at the time."

Cotler, who castigated the flyer as false and malicious, said it libeled Dion and he demanded an apology – which the Tories never made. ■

Rabbis spoke about Syrian refugees in their sermons

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein said members of City Shul wanted to get involved, because "Jewish values propelled us to 'know the heart of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt,'" she said in an email interview with *The CJN*.

Though the shul has only "200 membership units," 70 have volunteered to help and an equal number have provided funds, she stated.

Following her Yom Kippur sermon on the issue, City Shul members raised more than $80,000, including one donation of $27,600, some in the $2,000 to $5,000 range, and many between $18 and $1,800.

Rabbi Goldstein doesn't know who the shul will be sponsoring, though "we hope, [it will be] a large family with both parents and grandparents."

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl said one of his High Holiday sermons at Beth Tzedec focused on the Syrian refugee issue.

The synagogue's executive and board of governors agreed to take up the cause during the summer. The shul made contact with the relatives of an Ismaili Muslim family who have relatives who fled Syria and were living in Turkey.

The Ismailis practise "a liberal, tolerant brand of Islam," Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said. "We think this might be the family we will be sponsoring.

"Our focus is on family re-unification and while we are not looking at specific ethnic and religious groups, some ethnic, religious groups are more endangered," he said.

So far the synagogue has raised close to $27,000.

"I think in general there was a sense there was a mitzvah we had to do. For the Jewish community in particular, this is a bigger ask. We have a lot of concerns about Jewish-Muslim relations and Syrians in their relations to Israel, and we are concerned as a community over security issues."

Some members of the congregation wanted to focus the synagogue's efforts on Yazidis and Christians, he said.

In bringing a Syrian family to Canada, the aim is not to benefit the Jewish community, but to do so because "it is the right thing to do at this time." ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 12, 2015

Raheel Raza: Speaking out for Muslim women's rights

SUZANNE WINTROB
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Raheel Raza has been outspoken ever since she was a little girl growing up in Pakistan. Today, the award-winning journalist, author of *Their Jihad, Not my Jihad* and president of The Council for Muslims Facing Tomorrow is especially vocal about fighting women's rights abuses, particularly forced and underage marriage, honour killings and female genital mutilation (FGM) – all happening not only in Muslim countries, but right here in Canada.

Though Raza, a Sunni, has been tackling these issues since moving to Toronto in 1989 with her Shiite husband and two young sons, it wasn't until last year's release of the documentary *Honor Diaries* that she's finally seeing real change. The film, produced by Paula Kweskin of the Clarion Project, features Raza and other women's rights advocates as they engage in dialogue about gender inequality. Following public and private screenings around the world, *Honor Diaries* has taken on a life of its own and created what Raza calls "a movement."

On Nov. 19 and 20, the *Honor Diaries* team and the Global Women's Institute are hosting the first-ever Censored Women's Film Festival at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Four powerful documentaries will be screened, with filmmakers, experts and activists like Raza leading discussions. *The CJN* spoke to Raza, 65, before the festival.

What was life like growing up in Pakistan?

I grew up in a middle-class, moderate Muslim family. My father was in the army, my mother was a teacher. We grew up with Islam, but nothing was thrust down our throats, no extremism of any sort. I did my entire schooling in convent colleges run by Irish Catholic nuns. But in 1977, General Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq came to power and was very influenced by the Wahhabi/Salafi ideology from Saudi Arabia. That's when we saw the beginning of religious extremism that later morphed into violent extremism. My husband and I married that year, and soon after, left for Dubai. We both had rebellious natures and activist streaks of questioning the status quo. It wasn't kosher for a Muslim girl to ask questions, to ask why. I was always questioning and always in trouble.

What prompted you to get so passionate about championing human rights, particularly underage marriages, honour killings and FGM?

I grew up in a culture where women were supposed to be seen and not heard. Although I didn't see any direct abuse in my family, the honour culture permeated. It was all about, "Be careful what you say and do because you can dishonour the family." When I came to Canada, I found my voice. I found my freedom. All of these barbaric practices are happening here under the radar. They're hard to track and they're difficult to report. For instance, FGM has not been tracked in term of statistics in Canada, but we know it exists. In the U.S., close to half a million women are at risk of FGM or have had it. In Canada, there have been 23 honour killings reported as such since 1999. When it starts happening here to young innocent girls, it's absolutely frightening.

Raheel Raza

With migrants from Syria and Africa making their way to Europe and North America, should we be concerned that they will bring their tribal practices with them?

Yes, it is a worry, but it shouldn't sideline our compassion for the humanitarian cause. It's a very fine line to walk. In the wave of Syrian refugees that have gone into Europe, not all of them are genuinely Syrians. Some of the bad apples will blend in with them, and with that, there's always worry about these practices. No matter what crisis strikes the world, it's always the women who suffer the most. Syrian girls are being bought and sold, there's rape and abuse, their lives are at risk. So yes, there's a worry for both the humanitarian cause as well as our own welfare.

You're in favour of a "barbaric cultural practices" hotline. How would it differ from traditional methods of reporting crimes, such as Crime Stoppers or 911?

Since *Honor Diaries* was released, I get an email or phone call almost once a week from some girl right here who is distressed. I'm not a social worker, I don't have the qualifications to give someone the legal help they need. It's not just domestic violence. This is specific. If a woman calls police and says, "I fear that my family will take me home for a visit and force me into a marriage," the police can't do anything because a criminal act has not been committed. We need to train our law enforcement agencies, our legal system. The action part is not over yet. There's still a long way to go.

How do we educate the next generation, particularly women at risk and the men who may exert power over them?

A lot of it is about how mothers bring up their sons. I'm the mother of two sons. They're young Muslim men. It's up to me to have taught them how to respect women. Young men who grow up in patriarchal cultures where they're not taught to respect women have great difficulty in dealing with these issues. It has to be at a grassroots level.

You have a fatwa on your head. How do you sleep at night knowing that people want to silence you?

There are a lot of people who'd rather see me shut up. I have a fatwa from a cleric in Saudi Arabia, I've had death threats, I have hate mail. But if it's all coming to me, then it's bothering them. They know it's happening. They know there are women who are speaking out. I'm very fortunate that I have the support of the men in my family. My sons used to stand as bodyguards while I spoke. They'd love to give me pepper spray and make sure that I can protect myself. But it's not something that I want to think about because if I do, then I can't do the work that I do. Backlash against me is a very small drop in the ocean of the work that has to be done. I just literally don't think about it.

What's the big deal with the niqab – if a woman wants to wear it, why should we care?

The niqab should be banned in Canada because it's symbolic of the Islamist political ideology. Look at which parts of the world support the niqab. I grew up in the Islamic state of Pakistan with no niqab; we just draped a scarf over our head. Niqab comes from Saudi, it's an Al Qaeda symbol, a Taliban symbol, it's ISIS, al-Nusra. It starts off with this very small minority pushing for these little accommodations and then it just goes on and on. This is only an addition to a series of unreasonable accommodations that we have seen the Canadian government giving in to. It's scary because this is how the sharia zones were established in the U.K. and Europe. All we have to do is look at what has happened there and take a lesson from it.

Some say the niqab issue and the plight of Syrian refugees are hints of a fifth column trying to turn Canada and the rest of the world into a caliphate. How do you feel about that?

The fifth column is already here. Where do most Muslims get their direction and instructions? Either the Muslim Brotherhood or Al Qaeda or Khomeinism. None of these are ideologies that are friendly to the West. The Muslim Brotherhood says clearly that the West is evil, go there, infiltrate, assimilate and then weaken them from inside. It's not a message of "respect your neighbour," "love your neighbour," "live and let live," "follow your faith." It's that you must impose your ideology, their version of Islam, and establish a caliphate wherever you go. For people like ISIS, there are no borders, no nation states, no boundaries. They believe the whole world is for them to invade and to implement their ideology. The sooner Westerners get their minds around this, they will be more alert to what's happening.

When will moderate Muslims rise up against the minority of violent Muslims?

Some don't speak out because they're influenced by these ideologies. The moderate Muslims don't care because they just want to go to work, educate their kids and have a good life. When my children were growing up, we told them that this is our country by choice, this is the country we have adopted, this is your land. But this is not the general message that's given. It's always "us and them." These are messages that come from the mosques, which are troubling. They're also saying, "Don't talk to Jews and Christians." When you hear that over and over again, it creates a mindset.

Are you optimistic at all about your grandchildren's future?

I don't expect to see change overnight, or even in my lifetime. But we're trying to sow the seeds of change through this documentary, through our actions, through our outreach, and hope that this change will take root. I don't know how many generations it will take to bring about change, but what we can do is empower and support those women, communities and organizations that are speaking out. My husband and I laugh that we're two retirees trying to fight the world on our pensions. But that doesn't stop us from speaking out. My kids sometimes say, "Why don't you just give up and become a full-time grandmother and not do this?" But it's my own conscience, I have to sleep at night knowing that I did my bit. That's all that matters. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Can non-Jews achieve eternal bliss?

Backstory

JONATHAN L. MILEVSKY
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In 1773, Moses Mendelssohn, a Jewish philosopher and major figure in the Jewish enlightenment, corresponded with Rabbi Yaakov Emden, a respected rabbi and traditionalist based in Altona, Germany. At issue were the implications of a section in Maimonides' *Laws of Kings* which states that non-Jews who observe the Noahide laws, which include prohibitions such as murder, incest and theft, only attain a share in the world to come if they do so because God has given those commandments through Moses. This ruling was approved by the noted halachist Joseph Karo (d. 1575).

Mendelssohn could not accept that a community which had not received revelation, or which did not believe in the Torah, should nonetheless have no opportunity for salvation. Mendelssohn's piercing words, as translated by Michah Gottlieb, are as follows: "Shall all the inhabitants of the earth from east to west, except for us, be cast into a pit of annihilation and be abhorrent to all flesh if they do not believe in the Torah, which was given as an inheritance to the congregation alone?"

Mendelssohn added that the Noahide laws are seemingly not learned by exegesis – there is no clear-cut Biblical reference to them – but only through the Jewish tradition. He therefore asked, "What then shall be done by the nations on which the light of the Torah has not shone at all?"

Gottlieb explains that Mendelssohn sent the letter because he saw in the rabbi a kindred spirit. Nevertheless, Mendelssohn would find no comfort in the words of Emden. The response by Emden attempted to prove that Maimonides' position was borne out in the Talmud, though without specifying where, and ignored the concern at the heart of the question. In fact, Emden wrote (as translated by Steven Schwarzschild) that "all the justice and kindness which idolaters practise are sinful, because they act in this manner only in order to magnify themselves." As Shmuel Feiner writes, Emden was sceptical about the ideas of the Enlightenment. Certainly we could detect signs of that position in the rabbi's response.

> *What then shall be done by the nations on which the light of the Torah has not shone at all?*

The immediate significance of the exchange, of course, is its historical context and the way the enlightened view of the capacity of reason, particularly when it comes to creating moral systems, is in conflict with the view that the tradition provides all the answers. Indeed, even someone like Emden, who, as Jacob Schacter and others have explored, had moderate views when it came to Christianity, was not on the margins when it came to the issue of the requirements for attaining a share in the world to come.

The broader impact of this discussion, however, should reverberate among religious devotees everywhere, and it is a question that is arguably more relevant now, since the ideas of natural theology – the view that religious precepts can be ascertained from nature alone – are no longer tenable. Maimonides concludes his discussion of how Jews are to treat non-Jews in order to practise "ways of peace" by adding a verse from Psalms 145:9: "God is good to all, and his mercy extend to all His creations."

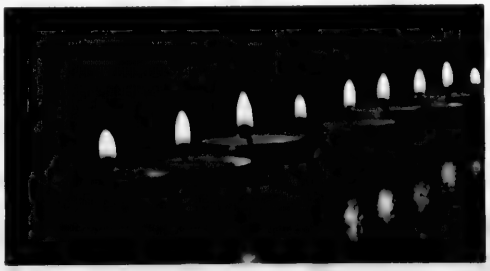
Certainly, more than one religion submits to a kind and just God, so this paraphrase of Mendelssohn's question has a bearing on other religious traditions as well: How are those who never received revelation – not to mention those who have never even been educated within the confines of a religious tradition but who live a righteous life by all accounts – supposed to achieve eternal bliss? What about them? ■

Jonathan L. Milevsky is a PhD candidate in Religious Studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Demon, Ifa	October 13, 2015	3560 Bathurst St	Pinkin, Hania	October 28, 2015	Private
Page, Rose	October 14, 2015	115 Doris Ave	Rosen, Betty	October 29, 2015	262 St. Clair Ave W
Cohen, Harold Herman	October 14, 2015	1925 Steeles Ave E	Fisher, Paul	October 29, 2015	2592 Merrington Cres
Rosen, Stanley	October 14, 2015	33 Empress Ave	Levi, Guitta	October 29, 2015	30 Donnalyn Dr
Matrosov, Semion	October 15, 2015	1101 Steeles Ave W	Foox, Cila	October 29, 2015	42 Israel Zilber Dr
Kabessa, Suzan "Shosh"	October 15, 2015	184 Canyon Hill	Skrobacky, Rachel	October 29, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Mernick, Lionel	October 16, 2015	2075 Bayview Ave	Morgulis, Alexander	October 29, 2015	720 Spadina Ave
Krumbolz, Helen	October 16, 2015	866 Sheppard Ave W	Hattin, Cecille	October 30, 2015	222 Strathallan Wood
Kopmar, David	October 16, 2015	29 Gauguin Ave			
Greene, Bernice	October 16, 2015	1 Kenton Dr			
Tock, Doris	October 17, 2015	3560 Bathurst St			
Stern, Eva	October 17, 2015	645 Castlefield Ave			
Caplin, Rose	October 20, 2015	784 Centre St			
Milos, Teresa Diane	October 23, 2015	18 Stadacona Dr			
Mellamed, Joseph	October 24, 2015	3560 Bathurst St			
Furman, Tina	October 24, 2015	34 Fraser St			
Marks, Lawrence	October 26, 2015	131 Torresdale Ave			
Cappe, Patty	October 26, 2015	650 Briar Hill Ave			
Levy, Baruch	October 28, 2015	711 Bay Street			



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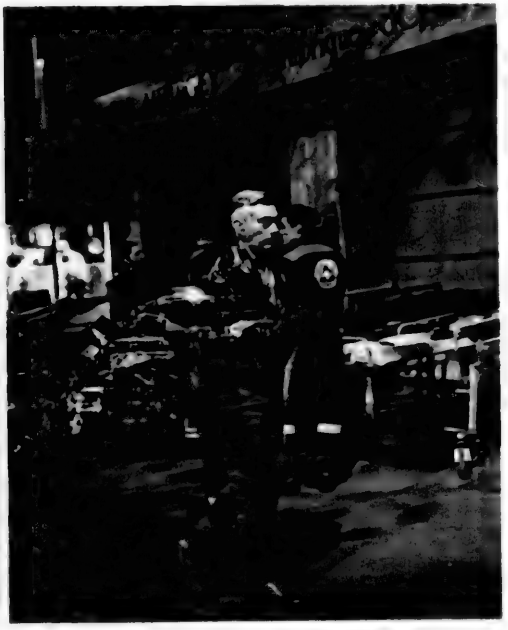

Fighting terror in Israel and France

In Jerusalem, there is an uneasy, disheartening air of déjà vu, but also a feeling that this time is different, writes Yair Lootsteen. **PAGE 8**

In Paris, horrifying attacks strike fear in the heart of the republic and underscore the need to combat ISIS. **PAGES 6, 31, 33, 34, 36**

Our supplement offers lots of party planning tips.
SPECIAL SECTION

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Halifax	4:24 p.m.	5:29 p.m.
Montreal	4:01 p.m.	5:07 p.m.
Ottawa	4:10 p.m.	5:16 p.m.
Toronto	4:30 p.m.	5:34 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:21 p.m.	5:32 p.m.
Calgary	4:24 p.m.	5:36 p.m.
Vancouver	4:07 p.m.	5:17 p.m.

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Syrian refugees: An 8-point plan

OPINION: How the Liberal government can offer help while mitigating risk. **PAGE 24**

B'nai Brith sells Alzheimer's home

New owner pledges to maintain facility for people suffering from dementia. **PAGE 12**

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THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

A hate ruling in B.C., and a Chanukah present you can't buy anymore

Anti-Semite convicted

A B.C. Supreme Court jury last week convicted Roy Arthur Topham of Quesnel, B.C., for promoting hatred against Jews on his website. Topham, 68, was charged in 2012 for postings on radicalpress.com that the Crown said demonize Jews and promote anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. He was convicted on one count for material from 2011 and 2012, but found not guilty for posts from 2013. Victoria resident Harry Abrams, a former B.C. representative for B'nai Brith Canada's League for Human Rights, alerted hate crimes investigators to the site, which also hosts texts like *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* and *The Biological Jew*.

Actress converts for love

Chalk up another win for the tribe: actress Zooey Deschanel has reportedly converted to Judaism. Deschanel, the daughter of a Quaker and a Roman Catholic, made the switch just before marrying producer Jacob Pechenik last June. *Us Weekly* broke the news (though it didn't reveal what denomination of rabbi supervised her conversion). The pair married a month before their daughter, Elsie, was born. "Zooey converted to Judaism for Jacob," an "insider" told the magazine. Deschanel, 35, stars in the Fox sitcom *New Girl*. Her films include *Failure to Launch* and *(500) Days of Summer*.

Zooey gets Jewsy

Offensive sweater pulled

U.S department chain Nordstrom pulled a women's Chanukah-themed sweater from its stores and website last week amid heavy criticism on social media that the item perpetuated negative stereotypes of Jewish women. The blue sweater featured the words "Chai Maintenance" knitted on top and "Hanukkah J.A.P." on the bottom. J.A.P. stands for the pejorative "Jewish American Princess." A men's version with "Mazel tov" on the front and "Oy vey" on the back remained on sale. "Cute and kitschy is one thing, but perpetuating negative stereotypes as supposedly cute or fun holiday wear is disgusting," said one poster on the chain's Facebook page. Meanwhile, Amazon.com continues to sell the women's version, but without the J.A.P. reference. ■

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTOS BY FLASH 90

Gematria

4

The number of Jewish finalists in last week's World Series of Poker, which was ultimately won by non-Jew Joe McKeehen.

4 to 5

The number of judges normally assigned to deal with traffic issues in Jerusalem. But with only two judges currently on full-time duty, police have been told to refrain from writing tickets that require court appearances.

Quotable

The next president is going to have to deal with a lot of issues that Obama just kicked down the road.

— Author and critic Leon Wieseltier. See p. 54.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

More on menorahs and menorah lighting with web columnist Mark Mietkiewicz.

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Letters to the Editor

The moderate Rabbi Kaplan

The great question for Diaspora Judaism in our time has been how much to segregate and how much to assimilate. A Judaism that is unwilling to make bold, even counter-cultural, statements about the world and about society is a Judaism lacking in leadership. At the same time, a Judaism which sets the bar of integrity too high will lose the hearts and minds of its people. The trick is to find the balance and to moderate the two forces in our communal life.

It does not take much analysis to figure out which force of this tension keeps winning out in the non-Orthodox movements. David Weinfeld's article ("Intermarrying rabbis: punchlines or prophets?" Nov.5) is yet another call to lower the religious bar further and accommodate rabbis married to non-Jewish spouses. Weinfeld resurrects the same old arguments, but should be cautious summoning the thought of Reconstructionist Judaism's founder, Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan.

Rabbi Kaplan was one of the most influential teachers at my alma mater, the Jewish Theological Seminary.

In particular, Rabbi Kaplan was a staunch opponent of intermarriage, referring to it as a breakdown of the basic covenant of Judaism and against the nature of being Jewish as God intended. No doubt he would be appalled at the assimilationist tendencies in all of the liberal movements as of late. He did want an evolving religious civilization, but not an acquiescing one.

Today the call must be to re-examine and reinforce our religious principles and, in particular, to pay attention to those customs and traditions that sustain Jewish preservation, and not those that threaten it. We need to make room in our hearts to accept notions that may be controversial, but that are essential to the richness and depth of our tradition. Let's embrace the conflicts and tensions of Jewish living before we seek to redefine it. I have no doubt that about this, Rabbi Kaplan would be in complete agreement.

Rabbi Jarrod Grover
Toronto

MPs and Jewish interests

I hope readers are not misled into thinking that just because an MP has a Jewish background, or Jewish mother, or goes to shul on Yom Kippur, or whatever it is that defines a Jew these days, that the MP will effectively represent Jewish interests in Parliament ("Six Jewish MPs head to Ottawa," Nov. 12). It is nice to read about the backgrounds of these individuals, but there is nothing there that guarantees Jewish, or Canadian interests for that matter, will be served effectively. The proof is in the actions and activities of these people and the governing Liberal party.

It should be noted that Peter Kent, who represents Thornhill, the largest Jewish constituency in the country and is not Jewish, and Stephen Harper's Conservative party by and large, represented Jewish interests quite well during their term in office. I am sure that Kent will continue to do so, even though the Conservatives no longer form the government. Conversely, Mark Adler, a Conservative who is Jewish, did not serve Jewish interests very well with his antics, proclaiming his need for a photo-op during Harper's visit to the Western Wall in Jerusalem. He was, rightfully, not re-elected.

The new Parliament hasn't convened yet, but we will have to wait and see what unfolds.

Howard Mednick
Thornhill, Ont.

Question of the week

The new Liberal cabinet has been sworn in, and now the work of governing begins. How well will the government of Justin Trudeau handle foreign policy issues?

Let us know in 150 words or less at cjninfo@gmail.com

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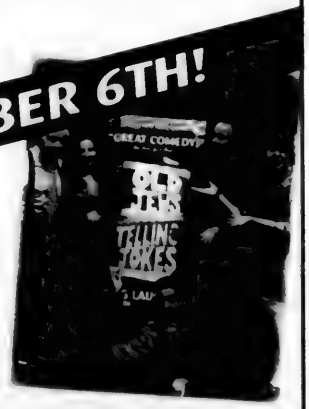

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RABBI·2·RABBI

The social media congregation

Are Facebook and Twitter avenues to generate a broader audience, or do they divert energy from conventional synagogue responsibilities?

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Scheier: The recent conversation about Orthodox women's ordination and titles has dominated my inbox and Facebook wall. As I read the many articles, posts and rabbinic proclamations, one aspect strikes me as significant: it seems that a disproportionate number of participants in this conversation are rabbis who do not have traditional pulpits. These rabbis share opinions not because they have been hired or elected by Jews seeking leadership, but simply because they have a keyboard and an Internet connection.

The result is revolutionary: communal norms and policies are being influenced by rabbis who are most active in social media and not necessarily by those community rabbis who, we like to believe, have their finger on the pulse of the Jewish world.

Perhaps there is an aspect of meritocracy to this – those with the best ideas and means of expression are heard loudest. On the other hand, this may represent a shift in rabbinic influence that leaves traditional community rabbis out in the cold.

What do you think about the new rabbinic landscape? Does social media give disproportionate weight to some voices over others?

Rabbi Cutler: It is absolutely true that social media has changed the landscape of influencers, rabbinic or otherwise. Those who write most often and share most widely will influence most greatly.

Social media does somewhat level the playing field, or at least lower the barriers to participation in important public conversations. But rabbis have a responsibility to share their vision. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are just modern iterations of communications platforms.

Rabbi Scheier: I am not certain if social media levels the playing field, as you write, or creates an entirely new playing field. This doubt feeds into my struggle with social media's grasp on my time and attention. On the one hand, I am aware of social media's powerful ability to expand the reach and diversity of the audience. On the other hand, I am aware that even when one of my Facebook posts generates scores of "likes" and "shares," come Shabbat morning in the synagogue, very few of my regulars will be aware of or tuned in to the conversations that have dominated social media.

In Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' 1992 essay "Creativity and Innovation in Halakhah," he warns of the sociological divide between the centres of Jewish law – the yeshivot – and the centres of congregational life.

I adapt this concern to a new reality: the sociological divide between those whose Jewish thinking is primarily influenced by their Facebook feed versus those whose Jewish thinking is primarily influenced by the pulpit or the Shabbat table discussion. At the very least, this divide will influence the allocation of time, efforts, and output of 21st-century rabbis.

Do you feel the tension between energies devoted to maintaining a social media presence and those dedicated to conventional rabbinic responsibilities?

Rabbi Cutler: Social media invites the question: who is our congregation? Of course, we both serve synagogues with a defined membership. Yet at the same time, we are looked upon by the wider community to share our words (if not our wisdom). The wider community, and indeed many within our own congregations, are not in shul on Shabbat. Social media is another avenue to generate a broader reach – within our membership and beyond. Indeed, my more popular posts find a larger audience than a Shabbat sermon.

Facebook, in particular, also facilitates conversation, expanding upon what was once the purview of kiddush and Shabbat lunch. If I want to not only share, but have people engage in a dialogue, social media has advantages over the traditional sermon. I particularly enjoy seeing friends from outside Toronto comment on my posts. They don't have the opportunity to hear me speak in shul and often have tremendous insight (if not expertise) in the topics about which I am posting. My local friends and congregants who see my posts and the comments that are generated gain tremendously from my network of some very bright commenting people.

I see social media as one more piece in the matrix of rabbinic responsibility. There is no more tension between traditional rabbinical responsibilities and social media than between visiting the sick and preparing for a class, or writing a sermon and planning an event. ■

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Vol. XLV, No. 45 (2,221)*

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Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation:
July 14, 2015

Postmaster: Please return 2985 and changes of address to CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7
Postage Paid at Toronto Canada Post Publication Agreement #40010684
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage

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An independent community newspaper serving as a forum for diverse viewpoints

Publisher and Proprietor: The Canadian Jewish News, a corporation without share capital. Head Office: 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord Ont. L4K 2L7

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From the Archives | When in Rome

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

Dora Dworkin, eighth from left, with a group in Rome in May 1954. Dworkin (1890–1976) was a prominent health-care worker in the Toronto Jewish community and a founder of Mount Sinai Hospital whose family business, Dworkin Travel, assisted hundreds of European Jews immigrating to Canada.

SeeJN | Hiking for a cause

Last month, 64 Canadians travelled to Israel for the eighth annual OneFamily Cross Israel Hike, a five-day trek across the Judean Desert to benefit OneFamily, which helps injured and bereaved victims of terror and war. Pictured second from right is Canadian Ambassador to Israel Vivian Bercovici, along with Gary Tile, executive director of OneFamily Fund Canada, OneFamily hiker Shawna Perli, second from left, and two Israeli mothers who were part of a bereaved couples retreat at the Dead Sea, sponsored by the OneFamily Canadian hikers.

From Yoni's Desk

After Paris, a lesson for Israel

In the days since Paris was attacked by the Islamic State (ISIS), many have sought to compare France's predicament to that of Israel. No doubt, there are clear connections between the terrorism Israelis face on a near-constant basis and the brutal ideology that fuelled the Nov. 13 multi-site rampage in the City of Light. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made the point over the weekend, saying, "In Israel, as in France, terrorism is terrorism, and the force standing behind it is radical Islam and its wish to destroy its victims." An image going around social media puts it more succinctly: "Paris 11/13; New York 9/11; Israel 24/7."

The crisis facing France and other western democracies certainly mirrors the long-standing conflict in Israel, and yet the ramifications are nonetheless different. The radicals who attacked France do not pose an existential threat, at least not in the near term. When French military jets embarked on bombing campaigns against ISIS targets in Syria Sunday night, that point was made clear: for France, the battleground is far away. True, there are issues on the home front – among them, local radicalization and the challenges of immigration – but the real enemy is in Syria and Iraq.

Israel's enemies, by contrast, are but a stone's throw – literally – away. The geographical space between Israelis and those directly trying to kill them is minuscule. In many cases, they live in the same cities, they see each other every day. And so it is a very different kind of terror – more immediate and easier to quantify, though that doesn't mean it can always be detected and defended against.

But even with the significant differences between the threats facing France and Israel, and even if the stakes are dissimilar, the path to defeat the enemy is one and the same. The goal must be to root out fundamentalism in all its forms, to hit radicals in their home bases, to hinder their ability to transmit an ideology of hatred into western nations, block their political and financial supporters, and impress upon civilians, especially those of a younger generation, that there is a better way forward for all.

And in that monumental endeavour, there is a real opportunity for France and Israel – for all western democracies – to work together. Shock and grief are natural in the immediate aftermath of such a bloody spectacle, but in order to defeat the enemy, it is necessary to quickly move forward, to resolve to fight back, to not be cowed into a spiral of fear, which is what ISIS, Hamas, Hezbollah and every terrorist organization desperately wants.

Here, the Israeli experience is perhaps most instructive. When terror strikes, as it has so often in recent weeks, Israelis respond in two distinct ways: they fight back by identifying the enemy and rooting him out, and, at the same time, they do their best to move on and get back to normal life, as odd as that sounds. They know the war can't be won in a single day or battle, but they are resolved to see it through, and to retain their humanity in the process. That's a lesson the whole world could use right now. ■ — YONI

OPINION

Celebrating women's graduation as spiritual leaders

Martin Lockshin

Amid all the troubling concerns about safety and security in Jerusalem, a good news story unfolded here on Oct. 20 at Midreshet Lindenbaum, a post-high school institute for women's learning. Over 300 people gathered to celebrate the graduation of Meira Welt Maarek and Chani Klein Ravhon from the Susi Bradfield Women's Institute for Halakhic Leadership (WIHL). Like me, much of the crowd was there to celebrate an auspicious historic event.

These two women (who are actually the third and fourth graduates of WIHL, preceded by Idit Bartov and Anat Novoselsky) completed a rigorous five-year course of full-time study of Talmud and Halachah, covering kosher food, Sabbath laws, family purity, mikvot, mourning, marriage and conversion. In other words, they mastered a curriculum identical to that of the men training for rabbinical ordination and passed similar examinations. Thus they are equal in knowledge and skill to their male rabbinical counterparts. (Full disclosure: when I was ordained as an Orthodox rabbi 40 years ago, I was tested on a significantly narrower range of areas of Jewish law than these women.)

Why was this event so significant?

Many of us remember the vast number of areas of advanced study that used to be closed to women. A century ago, women had virtually no opportunities to study and become doctors, lawyers or professors. Happily, society has changed and intellectual areas of study are no longer the exclusive domain of men. Women's intensive study of Jewish legal texts has expanded greatly in the same period, but not at the same pace as in the secular world.

Just as people used to assume that women were not cut out for secular intellectual fields of study, many Jews assumed that Talmud cannot be properly understood by a woman's brain. A hundred years ago, even teaching women Hebrew was felt to be unimportant in some circles.

From left, Meira Welt Maarek and Chani Klein Ravhon NURIT JACOBS YINON/ ALUMA FILMS PHOTO

Sixty years ago, there were still no schools where a woman could pursue high-level intensive study of the Talmud and codes of Jewish law. But society's attitudes to women's intellectual capabilities changed, and Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the acknowledged 20th-century leader of American Orthodox Judaism, gave his blessing to women's Talmud study back in the middle of the 20th century.

Since Rabbi Soloveitchik's time, excellent schools and programs for women to study Talmud rigorously have opened, mostly here in Israel but also in the United States. (Sadly no such programs exist in Canada.) Many Canadian, American and Israeli Orthodox young women (including two of my daughters) were introduced to intensive Talmud study right in the study hall of Midreshet Lindenbaum, the same place where the ceremony took place on Oct. 20.

Jewish tradition has always encouraged the idea of Torah lishmah, the study of Torah for its own sake, not for any title or certificate. Most men and women who study Talmud intensively study lishmah.

But halachic Jews also need certified religious leaders who are experts in Talmud and Halachah, marriage counsellors who deeply understand Jewish tradition, texts and values, and spiritual leaders to bring us appropriate Jewish messages when we mourn or when we are sick. Women who have the proper training serve in such roles as effectively as male rabbis.

Furthermore, every halachic Jew needs to have a person to whom he or she can turn for rulings on complicated questions of Jewish law. Whenever halachic Jews follow a rabbi's ruling, they are relying on the fact that the rabbi was "ordained," i.e. was declared to be a *moreh horaah*, a person who has passed the tests and is thus deemed reliable to rule.

A few decades ago, again here in Jerusalem, at an institution called Nishmat, an innovative program was begun to give women intensive instruction in the rules of "family purity, on the reasonable assumption that a woman questioner would feel freer discussing her intimate life with another woman than with a male rabbi. The graduates of that program pass tests and receive the title *yoatzot Halachah* (halachic advisers), thus certifying that a questioner could rely on the ruling of that *yoetzet*.

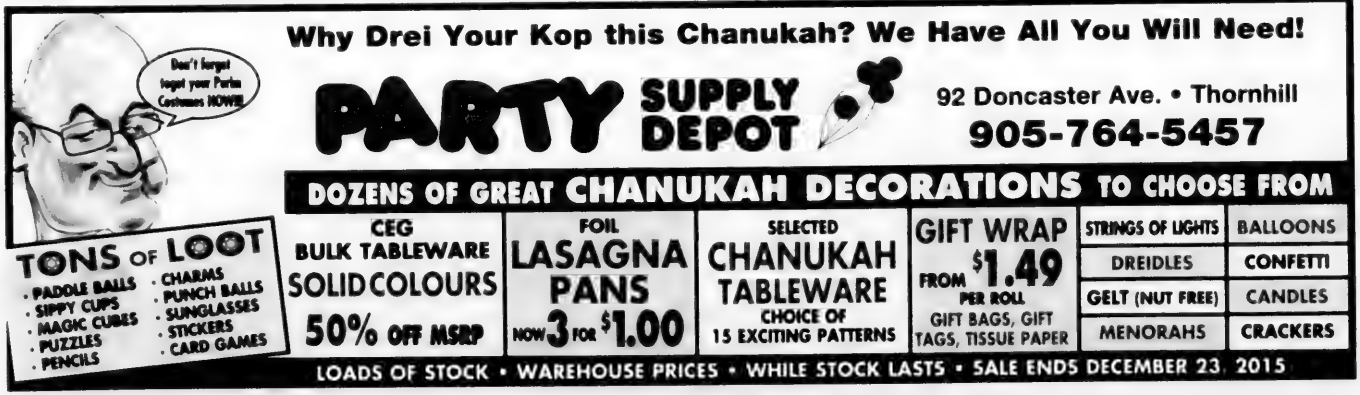
The event here in Jerusalem on Oct. 20 is simply the next logical step. Two brave women, who had already spent many years studying Torah lishmah, decided to dedicate five more years to full-time study. They passed the customary tests and were given the titles *manhigah ruchanit* (spiritual leader) and *morat horaah* (the feminine form of moreh horaah, i.e. a woman whose halachic rulings may be relied on).

Naysayers still abound. Recently, after a heated and lengthy debate, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) decided by majority vote to reject the idea of women serving in rabbinic positions, even if they are not called rabbis.

But in Israel, many rabbis are more open. Dozens of Orthodox rabbis attended this graduation. The speakers deserve special mention: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, chief rabbi of Efrat and head of the Ohr Torah Stone (OTS) network of educational institutions, which includes Midreshet Lindenbaum and the WIHL; Rabbi David Stav, chief rabbi of Shoham, head of the Tzohar rabbinical organization in Israel and newly appointed co-chancellor of OTS; and rabbis Yehoshua Reich and Shmuel Klitsner, who run the program.

They are all to be congratulated for standing up to opposition to bringing Orthodox Judaism into the 21st century, and primarily for giving the halachic community two excellent new spiritual leaders. And let us hope that Torah will go forth from Zion and will have an influence on the Orthodox Jews of North America, too. ■

Martin Lockshin, a former professor at York University, made aliyah this summer.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Trying to make sense of the senseless

As the violence continues in Jerusalem, Israelis look for answers and a way to move forward

YAIR LOOTSTEEN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, JERUSALEM

It's now several weeks into the current round of another seemingly endless, relentless cycle of violence, and I find myself disconsolate, not knowing where this will lead. For those of us who endured the first and second intifadahs there is an uneasy, disheartening air of déjà vu, but also a feeling that this time is different.

Until the security wall was completed, during the last intifadah, most Israelis were wary of suicide bombers, who most frequently made their way into Israel from the West Bank. This time around, things have not come to that. Credit that to the much maligned, but highly effective, security barrier, as well as to the IDF, police and Shin Bet, who continue their often Sisyphean efforts to contain West Bank terrorist elements, and to the ongoing security co-ordination between our forces and the Palestinian Authority's (PA) security forces acting in the West Bank, which continues on the ground efficiently, despite tensions between Israeli and Palestinian political leaders.

These are uneasy days. We're experiencing terrorism writ large. Violence and intimidation aimed at sowing fear among Israelis, in an apparent pursuit of political purposes. Young Palestinians carrying out random acts of hatred knowing full well they could die in the process. They are not affiliated directly with specific terrorist organizations. When they stab or bludgeon bystanders arbitrarily, or use their cars to run over innocent victims at bus stops or on sidewalks, they are acting alone. And the local nature of their crimes makes it harder for Israel's intelligence community to prevent such actions before they occur.

Other differences exist between this uprising, this intifadah, this round of violence – call it what you will – and those that preceded it. In previous cycles, east Jerusalemites and Israeli Arabs mostly stayed out of the physical fray. Now, young east Jerusalemites are taking active roles.

Social media and smartphones are also a big difference. Young, would-be perpetrators gobble up incitement and are egged on to act through Facebook and the like. Photos and videos of every terrorist act and its outcome go viral. Push notifications provide blow-by-blow accounts of every incident.

A knife at the scene of a stabbing in Jerusalem on Oct. 30. YONATAN SINDEL FLASH 90 PHOTO

Experts are proffering their opinions as to why this violence is happening now: the Palestinians perceive a change in the status quo on the Temple Mount; rabid incitement by PA officials, including President Mahmoud Abbas; Israel's continued settlement activity in the West Bank; the lack of progress in the peace process; almost 50 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank; genuine feelings of disenfranchisement among young Palestinians in the West Bank, east Jerusalem and, to some degree, within Israeli Arab society; and the contempt these same young people feel for their own Palestinian leadership. But whatever the motivation, no excuse can be made for wanton bloodshed.

While it might not to be popular to admit it, people here are scared. Businesses are suffering. Hotels announced cancellations for the Chanukah, Christmas and New Year holiday season. Folks are going out less. Those who do, watch their backs.

• • •

On a beautiful Tuesday morning in mid-October, I was working out with my friend Meir in Armon Hanatziv, a neighbourhood in southern Jerusalem. Like many liberal, open-minded Israelis, over the last decade or so, Meir has shifted politically from left of centre – from someone willing to make painful concessions to the Palestinians in anticipation of real peace – to someone who now sees himself in Israel's political centre.

He believes Israel has bent over backward to accommodate the Palestinians, to come to an equitable resolution of the conflict. Former prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Ehud Barak, Ehud Olmert all were willing to make far-reaching concessions, only to have those overtures rejected out of hand and met with unacceptable violence. For people like Meir, all trust in the Palestinians and in the Oslo process has dissipated, and before Israel can be expected to return to the negotiating table, they believe Palestinian violence must cease and their leaders must call upon their people, in Arabic, to accept Israel and to put down their swords in good faith.

As we walked that morning along the promenade with one of the most spectacular views one can get of the Old City, Meir and I continued an ongoing discussion of how things should be resolved, with my own views being farther to the left than his. We also talked about whether we should continue working out along this promenade, which is frequented by many Arabs from nearby east Jerusalem neighbourhoods, and if so, what precautions we might take.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

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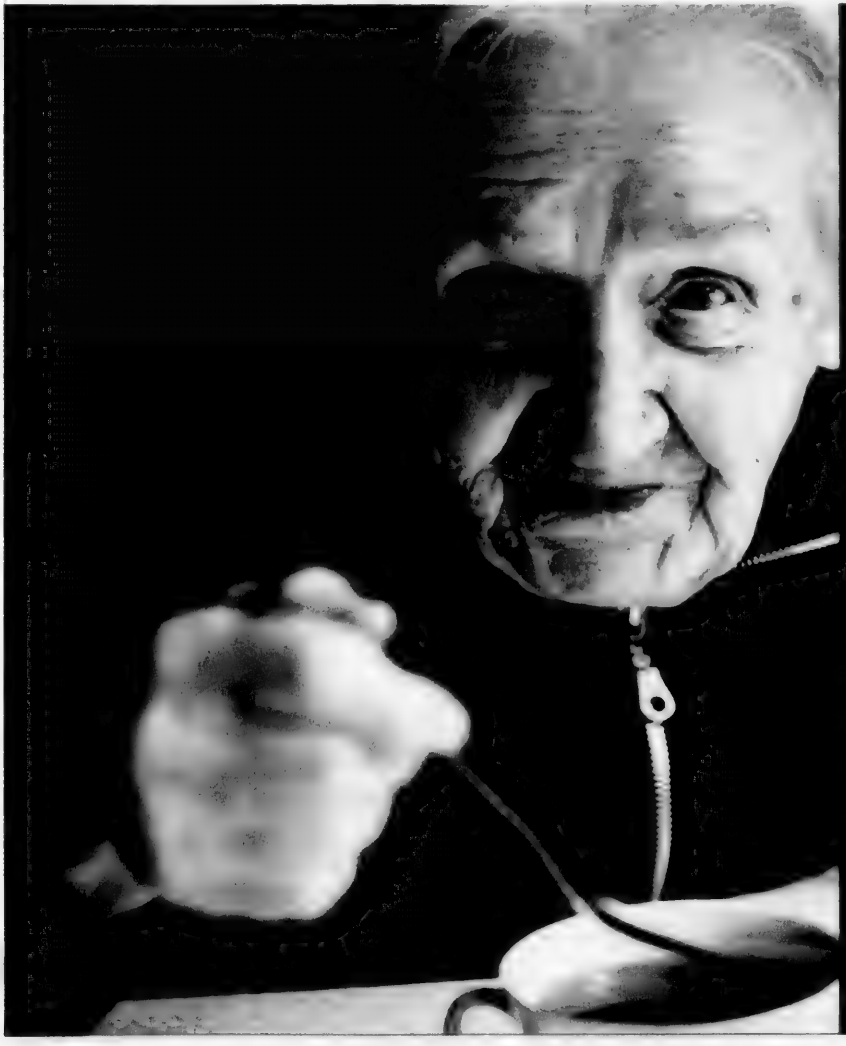

Where would you go if you couldn't pay your rent and were on the brink of losing your housing? What would you do if your children were hungry and you couldn't afford to pay your electric bill and still feed them dinner? How would you carry on if you were elderly and alone, isolated and unable to leave your apartment?

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 19, 2015

I trust our prime minister to stick to his word

Gil Troy

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's impressive victory has many in the pro-Israel community worrying. Former prime minister Stephen Harper was such an enthusiastic friend that the concerns are logical. If we're often told in government to follow a strategy of "better the devil you know" than the unknown, it is really hard to let go of an angel. But Trudeau spent the campaign insisting on his warm support for the Jewish state and criticizing Harper for turning Israel into a "political football." Now is the time both to take Trudeau at his word and make the case why candidate Trudeau was correct when he praised Israel's and Canada's "enduring bond of friend, rooted in our shared commitment to peace and democracy," when he called Hamas a "terrorist organization," with no dilly-dallying during the Gaza conflict, and when he has denounced the boycott movement so eloquently.

The first step, is reassuring Trudeau that support for Israel remains a popular, core grassroots all-Canadian, all-party commitment. In the battle over deciphering the election returns, it's essential to stress that this campaign focused on domestic issues mostly and that Harper lost because of Harper fatigue and Trudeaumania, not because of Harper's support for Israel. Israel's enemies will be quick to say: Harper supported Israel and Harper lost, therefore, Harper lost *because* of his support for Israel. They followed a similar logic when Canada did not win the seat on the United Nations Security Council, and to this day, despite impressive proof that the issue had more to do with UN politics than anything else, many point to Canada not being on the Security Council as the "cost" of supporting Israel.

Trudeau was right throughout the election to insist that the Liberal party has a proud history of supporting Israel. It's one of those happy corners in the political word where doing right makes for good politics. While I was grateful to Harper and his team for their ardent support for Israel, I agree with Trudeau that support for Israel should be seen as a common value uniting all Canadian parties and not a wedge issue.

Now, of course, comes the hard part: translating the poetry of the campaign into the prose of governance, as former New York governor Mario Cuomo once put it. Already, Trudeau's new foreign affairs minister, Stephane Dion, triggered some concerns with his call for Canada to return to its historic role as an "honest broker." Trudeau must make it clear that being an "honest broker" is not a fig leaf for going back to the bad old amoral days of former prime minister Jean Chrétien, when Canada feared taking clear moral stands against terrorism and dictatorship at the UN and elsewhere. An "honest broker" that is open to all, but can draw the lines morally between democracies and dictatorships, between terrorists and victims, is essential in today's topsy-turvy world.

Trudeau could benefit from a tutorial with another charismatic liberal leader, former U.S. president Bill Clinton. As I show in my new book *The Age of Clinton: America in the 1990s*, Clinton evolved on foreign policy. He started by dodging conflict and muting his moral voice. But his passivity failed to stop the Rwanda genocide. Eventually he realized that he had to stand strong morally – and sometimes even violently – because the world abhors a vacuum. And, on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Clinton understood two important lessons that candidate Trudeau said he learned. First, Israel needs to feel loved, secure, supported, especially by leading democracies. And second, when Palestinians turn to terror, excusing them is not being an honest broker, but an enabler. When necessary, Clinton confronted the Palestinians – and gave Israel $100 million in funds to fight terror.

In today's world, Canada cannot retreat in the fight against terror – and I trust Trudeau to stick to his word. ■

Using the past to build bridges

Sara Horowitz

It wasn't Holocaust Education Week in Montana. But in the midst of the extensive remembrance programing on-going in Toronto, I flew westward. I joined half a dozen other professors of Holocaust studies to begin a conversation with colleagues whose work centred on aboriginal studies, African-American studies, gender studies, and other forms of historical or contemporary oppression.

At a symposium exploring the dimensions of historical trauma, scholars and researchers on the Shoah shared perspectives with professors, psychologists, and others who have knowledge and experience with other peoples who have experienced (and continue to experience) oppression and victimization. Part of a series of partnered events initiated by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in collaboration with ethnic studies programs at North American universities, the symposium brought together people who may not be in frequent conversation with one another and demonstrates what they – that is, we – have in common and what we might learn from one another.

Audience members were definitely not the "usual suspects" – folks we encounter again and again at Holocaust education programs. Although roughly half the presentations addressed Holocaust memory and survivors' experiences, only a small percentage of the audience was Jewish. This was simply a reflection of the demographics of the region. People from the local shul came, and one Jewish couple drove 12 hours from their home in North Dakota to attend. But many in the audience had little previous knowledge of the Holocaust. They were drawn to the symposium because of other interests, out of cultural curiosity or – as one student put it – because an education should push you outside your comfort zone, transform you, push you to think about things that matter deeply.

One important function of Holocaust remembrance is to create a space and time for the people targeted by the Nazis to look inward – to mourn losses and to celebrate survival. An equally important function, however, is to reach across ethnic, cultural and religious divides to engage in conversation with others. As the distinguished Israeli historian Yehuda Bauer has noted, the Holocaust is a "starting point" for thinking broadly about genocide and the impetus for taking action to resist genocide.

Instead of pitting communities against one another in a contest of comparative suffering, the conversation in Montana acknowledged the differences in historical experience by giving each history its due and looking at the details that distinguish one set of experiences from another. But it also emphasized that one can use one's own collective memory to create bridges of empathy with others and to foster understanding rather than suspicion.

Because of the geography and history of the region, a significant number of participants were native Americans whose professional work centred on the challenges facing aboriginal people; the abysmal legacy of policies, practices and attitudes that tore apart communities and families; and suppressed communal practices. While the circumstances of indigenous peoples in the United States and Canada in some ways differ, they share much. The material, psychological and cultural impact of the historical policies of both countries' governments continue to shape people's lives and the communities they inhabit.

When I was a child, my father taught math and history in inner-city schools in New York. He chose to work in these schools rather than in more affluent neighbourhoods because he believed students there needed teachers who cared about them. I remember him working on weekends to compose musical plays that he would have his students perform, to persuade them of the importance of math or to engage them with history. He would write extended lyrics set to popular Broadway tunes. If he were alive today, he would probably rap. He was drawn to these students because, like them, he had been the target of prejudice. What I learned by watching him, and what I saw in Montana, is that we're most ourselves when we reach across communities and claim our common ground. ■

Why Justin Trudeau's Canada should concern us

Michael Taube

Justin Trudeau and the Liberals, to their credit, ran a very effective campaign during the recent federal election.

Briefly, the party's political vision resonated with people. They had few errors or political gaffes to speak of. They convinced Canadian progressives that they were the best choice to replace Stephen Harper and the Tories.

When you put it all together, the Liberals deserved to win on Oct. 19. End of story.

This doesn't mean I agree with the decision of 39.47 per cent of Canadians to give the Trudeau Liberals a majority government this year (184 out of 338 seats), of course. The same way many people didn't agree with the decision of 39.62 per cent of Canadians who gave the Harper Tories a majority government four years ago (166 out of 308 seats).

That's the nature of an election in a democratic society like Canada. The voters are always perceived as being right, even when many of us think they're wrong.

As an aside, we've only had a small handful of prime ministers elected with more than 50 per cent of popular support in 42 federal elections. This short list is composed of Sir Wilfrid Laurier (1900, 1904), Sir Robert Borden (1917), William Lyon Mackenzie King (1940), John Diefenbaker (1958) and Brian Mulroney (1984). So, there's always going to be some voter disenchantment after the fact.

None of this matters, however. Trudeau is Canada's 23rd prime minister, and we'll soon find out what the new government's economic direction is. Parliament will be reconvened Dec. 3, and the speech from the throne will be released the following day.

For Canadian conservatives (yes, there are still a few of us around), the early indications are nothing short of disastrous. The size of government will substantially increase, more taxpayer dollars will be wasted, and certain components of Harper's informal 10-year plan to build a "Conservative Canada" will quickly disappear.

Don't believe me? Let's cherry-pick a few items.

The Liberals have committed to running three straight economic deficits. They'll establish a new 33 per cent tax bracket above $200,000 in taxable income. They're going to eliminate "Stephen Harper's tax breaks for the wealthy," including recent increases in contributions to tax free savings accounts. Education and textbook tax credits will be cancelled. The CBC will receive $150 million per year in new funding. Green infrastructure projects will be allocated $20 billion over 10 years. Hundreds of millions of dollars will be re-established for projects related to health care, climate change and aboriginal programs.

Look, there's no question that the Harper Tories were imperfect on the financial file. As I've mentioned many times over the years, I was often frustrated by this government's lack of commitment (at times) to fiscal conservatism.

This frustration will seem like a cakewalk compared to the Trudeau Liberals, however. Unless the two fiscal thinkers in cabinet, Finance Minister Bill Morneau and Treasury Board President Scott Brison, have some influence over the new prime minister, wasteful public spending is back in vogue in Canada.

It doesn't stop there.

There will also be massive changes to the anti-terrorism act, Bill C-51. The small, symbolic role Canada had in the war against ISIS will be ended. Trudeau's proposal to somehow bring in 25,000 Syrian refugees (a decent, but costly move) is still on the table.

We shouldn't forget Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion's declaration that Canada will, once again, be an "honest broker" in relations with Israel. Canadian Jews certainly don't have to be told what this means. They know damn well what's going to happen.

To make a long story short, Canada's widely respected leadership role under Harper in foreign policy and the war on terror will fall by the wayside. The progressive peaceniks are back in charge, alas.

If that's the Canada you want, you got it. I'll pass on the celebrations, if you don't mind. ■

Learning the lessons of political partisanship

Bernie Farber

With the election a month behind us, it's time to take stock. For the past decade, Canada has been governed from the right. The Conservative party's style was of a kind we've never seen before. Some pundits have described Stephen Harper's political management as negative and divisive. Harper himself has been called, a micro-manager and a control-freak who wanted to turn Canada hard to the right.

This mattered little for much of Canada's Jewish community. Why? Because Harper was one of the world's strongest supporters of the State of Israel. I have said of Harper that he was the best prime minister Israel never had. In this there was a kind of seduction. Historically, Canadian Jewry's advocacy groups – Canadian Jewish Congress, the Canada-Israel Committee, and even B'nai Brith and Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center – always understood the first lesson of government relations was to swim in all political swimming pools. But with the advent of a prime minister who spoke so lovingly of Israel, only one swimming pool seemed to have any water.

During the last four years of Harper majority government, there was no longer even a pretense of non-partisanship. For example, last March, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau – in an attempt to highlight Islamophobia in Canada – invoked the 1930s memory of Canada's "none is too many" mindset. Indeed, politicians must be careful when using what some would view as Nazi analogies, and we must make this clear from time to time. However, Trudeau was discussing indifference to genocide, not committing genocide itself. But the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) would have none of it, and tersely rebuked him in a harshly worded press release.

Two days later, CIJA made a complete about-face when it came to Conservative Holocaust analogies. Discussing the same anti-terror bill, then-public safety minister Steve Blaney noted that "The Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers, it began with words" – a blatant use of the Holocaust to advance controversial, partisan legislation, focused directly on the act of genocide. CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel rushed to Blaney's defence, declaring that, in this case (given ISIS' extremism), the comparison was "not entirely out of place."

> *During the last four years of Harper majority government, there was no longer even a pretense of non-partisanship*

A few months later, in June, when this same government's anti-terrorism bill was given royal assent, CIJA chose to be the only organization in Canada to lend its name to a government press release supporting the legislation. Never in my memory has any Jewish advocacy organization been so obviously partisan in support of such controversial legislation. Even though many in our community may have supported it, surely a CIJA media release would have sufficed. Joining the government's official media statement was over the line.

Indeed, even during last month's election, when Trudeau and the Liberals were repeatedly vilified by some significant members of our own community with the silly notion that the party had been infiltrated by Islamic extremists, CIJA refused to counter these calumnies. It explained in an email – seen by many – that the "CRA [Canada Revenue Agency], Elections Canada and the LRA [Lobbyists Registration Act] prohibit CIJA from commenting on such things." CIJA declined to correct the record on the basis that it would be "partisan" to do so. This was clearly not the case, as CIJA well knew.

There you have it: a brief history of blatant one-sidedness that must now be undone. I'm confident Prime Minster Trudeau understands the necessity of communal engagement and will continue to participate in constructive dialogue with our community, despite the partisanship of the past. I also believe that many of our community's leaders must now realize that their understandable dedication to Israel and the Jewish People sometimes got the better of them. Hopefully, the most basic lesson has been learned by our community's advocacy professionals: there's more than one swimming pool in this country, and we must swim in them all. ■

News

B'nai Brith sells Alzheimer's residence

PAUL LUNGEN
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One Kenton Alzheimer Centre for Excellence opened in December 2013. GOOGLE STREETVIEW PHOTO

B'nai Brith Hillel of Toronto has sold One Kenton Alzheimer Centre for Excellence (One Kenton), a residence for patients suffering from various forms of dementia, as part of a restructuring that has allowed both to avoid bankruptcy – at least for now.

The 45-bed facility, which is less than half full, was acquired by One Kenton Memory Care Limited Partnership, a new entity headed by Avi Gottlieb, the president of Avcon Construction, the company that built One Kenton. Gottlieb said he has put a team in place, including Manny and Shael Simon of Eldercare Equities, who will operate the facility, and Isaac Weinroth, who will serve as its executive director. Weinroth held the same position at One Kenton when it first opened.

"I saw this as a great opportunity to give something back to the community," Gottlieb told *The CJN*. "It is something that is greatly needed in our community and in the general community. The facility is state of the art – I know, because I built it."

Gottlieb said he expects the new management will offer cutting-edge technology and focus on new programming, treatment and activities to ensure a high quality of life for the residents.

"The key for me is to ensure that everybody is treated with dignity and respect and that there is a seamless transition for them," Gottlieb said.

Avcon was contracted to build One Kenton, which opened in December 2013, but the company had to take a second mortgage in May 2014 when B'nai Brith Hillel ran out of money and was unable to pay them.

"They more or less forced my hand," Gottlieb said, adding it was either take the mortgage or walk away.

The second mortgage was valued at $1.6 million and was held by Avcon, Claude Ayache and Norel Electric.

The Bank of Nova Scotia (BNS) held a first mortgage of $8 million on the property, of which more than $7 million was still owing.

B'nai Brith Hillel, which shares the same Hove Street address as B'nai Brith Canada, owns the property at 1 and 3 Kenton, while One Kenton Alzheimer Centre for Excellence operates the residence.

One Kenton's financial difficulties reached a head in June. It was rapidly running out of money to pay its debts and facing the prospect of being petitioned into bankruptcy, B'nai Brith Hillel sought court protection from creditors.

In an affidavit filed in court, Michael Mostyn, who serves as CEO of One Kenton, B'nai Brith Hillel and B'nai Brith Canada, said One Kenton was facing "a liquidity crisis."

Altogether, B'nai Brith Hillel had debts in June totaling $10.9 million while One Kenton owed creditors more than $90,000. At the time, B'nai Brith Hillel and One Kenton had $67,000 in cash, but were spending $50,000 per month.

One Kenton and B'nai Brith Hillel each filed a notice of intention to make a proposal under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, which, when approved by the court, provide an automatic stay of proceedings against the creditors. A. Farber & Partners was named proposal trustee and tasked with finding a buyer of One Kenton and managing the facility's financial affairs. At the same time, BNS extended a credit facility to allow One Kenton to continue to operate.

Court has been asked on several occasions to permit extensions of the stay period. The most recent lasts until Nov. 23, when B'nai Brith Hillel and One Kenton are expected to present proposals to their creditors.

Gottlieb would not reveal the purchase price, saying only that he acquired it "free and clear."

A. Farber & Associates did not respond to email questions by *The CJN's* press time, and Mostyn also did not respond by press time to queries.

In acquiring One Kenton, Gottlieb acknowledged he's not an expert in running a home for Alzheimer's patients, which is why he assembled an expert operations team. But he's had personal experience of the heartache it can create. His father is experiencing the onset of dementia, and it has made him "more sensitive to it and created a bond with the family members" at One Kenton.

Looking at it from a business perspective, he said, "It's important to create a new image for the facility" and to try to close in on 100 per cent occupancy.

When One Kenton was first conceived in 2002 by former B'nai Brith Canada CEO Frank Dimant and B'nai Brith donors, it was envisioned as a 24-bed home for Alzheimer's patients. But after an adjacent property became available, it was acquired in 2006 and plans were amended to make it a 45-bed facility, Mostyn stated in an affidavit filed in court.

The facility was expected to be a state of the art, personalized facility with a staff to resident ratio of three to one.

Despite its lofty ideals, One Kenton opened with only four residents. During 2014, there were never more than 17 permanent residents in the building, and it's currently home to 19 people. To break even, the 45-bed facility would need 33 or 34 residents, Mostyn stated in an affidavit. ■

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CIJA renews effort to alleviate school funding squeeze

SHERI SHEFA
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The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) will push for public money for Jewish day schools through a newly launched task force meant to help address the affordability crisis in Jewish education.

Although lobbying the government for public support for all faith-based schools is not a new concept, Noah Shack, CIJA's director of public policy and chair of the Affordable Jewish Education Task Force, said the group will not take the same approach that has failed in the past.

"There is a recognition that core funding for Jewish education is not going to be forthcoming from the public sector any time soon, and we need to look at different near-term objectives," Shack said.

"Those can include funding for health and social service-related activities that the schools are engaged in, or security expenses that the schools have – those are the types of things we think there could be some space for the public sector to really help to alleviate the cost borne by schools and parents and to make Jewish education more affordable in that way," he added.

"Unfortunately, there is a lot of experience with initiatives to try to make education more affordable that have failed. We want to bring together as many people as possible from diverse viewpoints from across the community to co-ordinate a strategy that makes the most sense for the most people, to work together to achieve some results."

One of the groups CIJA is consulting is Grassroots for Affordable Jewish Education, formed earlier this year to help parents who can't afford Jewish education for their children.

Former *CJN* editor Mordechai Ben-Dat, a co-founder of the group, said he's encouraged the organized Jewish community is putting affordability back on the agenda. "We're going to help them if we can. It doesn't matter to us who moves the ball up the hill, as long as it's moving up the hill," Ben-Dat said.

Shack said that as the advocacy agency of the Jewish federations, CIJA will focus on the issue from a public sector perspective. "We're looking at what support the government can give to our educational institutions – what budget areas for our schools can we secure some funding for. It's not going to be for the core curriculum, but maybe for the other things that can help lower costs for the schools and lower tuition for students."

Noah Shack

Ben-Dat said one area CIJA could tackle has to do with children with disabilities attending private schools, noting that the province may not provide funding for all students who need it.

"We have two sets of regulations – one under the health act and one under the education act. Under the health act, the government pays for health support services for disabled children in private schools."

The province's School Health Support Services program includes nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology and dietetics.

Ben-Dat explained that when a child has a stutter, the government will pay for treatment under the health act, but if a child has a different speech impediment that's determined to be a learning disability that's categorized under the education act, the private school would be forced to cover any extra costs.

"This is an opening for us. It makes no sense to have two sets of regulations... Here we have disabled children in our backyard, and it is unconscionable that if you're under the health act, you get something, but if you're under the education act, you do not," Ben-Dat said.

"If CIJA can help recover or abate the costs for schools in this area... then that is tremendous."

Shack said the first meeting, which will be held at the end of the month, will be an opportunity to hear from community experts about how best to move forward.

"Our expectations are muted, because of our previous experiences, but the failures of the past have galvanized the people who have been involved in this struggle. I think more and more people are on the same page about how to move forward and the need to move forward in concert, together. There may not be uniformity in terms of people's opinions, but there is unity of purpose, and I think that is the key to achieving results here," Shack said. ■

For more information, or to get involved, email info@cija.ca.

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JSpace panellists differ on where to draw boundaries

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From left, Mira Sucharov, Joan Garson, Sara Lefton and Jacqueline Swartz JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

People in the Jewish community who try to silence others who hold disparate political views about Israel was the main topic of a panel at JSpace Canada's 2015 biennial conference.

Entitled "How do we talk to each other? Do we even have the same language?" the session was one of several at the event, held Nov. 14-15 at the University of Toronto's Multi-Faith Centre.

JSpace calls itself a Jewish, pro-Israel, pro-peace group that provides "Canadians with a fair and balanced alternative to the rigidly pro-Israel right and the anti-Israel left."

Several dozen people attended the panel, moderated by *Walrus* editor Jonathan Kay. It featured Joan Garson, chair of the New Israel Fund of Canada (NIFC); Sara Lefton, vice-president of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA); Mira Sucharov, associate professor of political science at Carleton University and a contributor to *Ha'aretz* and *The CJN*; and Jacqueline Swartz of the Canadian Friends of Peace Now (CFPN) executive.

The speakers addressed the hostile environment during the recent federal election and the tensions that flared between supporters of former prime minister Stephen Harper and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, and those who vocally criticized the latter.

Though the speakers differed on whom they'd engage in discussion about Israel, they agreed that negatively labelling Jews from different positions on the political spectrum harms the community.

Garson referenced a recent incident that she said exemplified "the kind of oppression that can impair open discussion."

She said the NIFC was recently asked to organize an event in a Canadian city on the topic of pluralism. When right-wing U.S. blogger Pamela Geller heard about it, she called those involved "traitors," and the shul cancelled the event. "They were bullied," Garson said.

Kay said to Lefton that CIJA is accused of being "monolithic" and asked her about censorship in the community. Lefton said she's regularly accused of being "a shill for the Conservatives, a shill for the Liberals and a shill for the NDP."

She said CIJA was similarly concerned about the divisiveness and abusiveness during the election, and said it seemed "everybody felt they were being attacked."

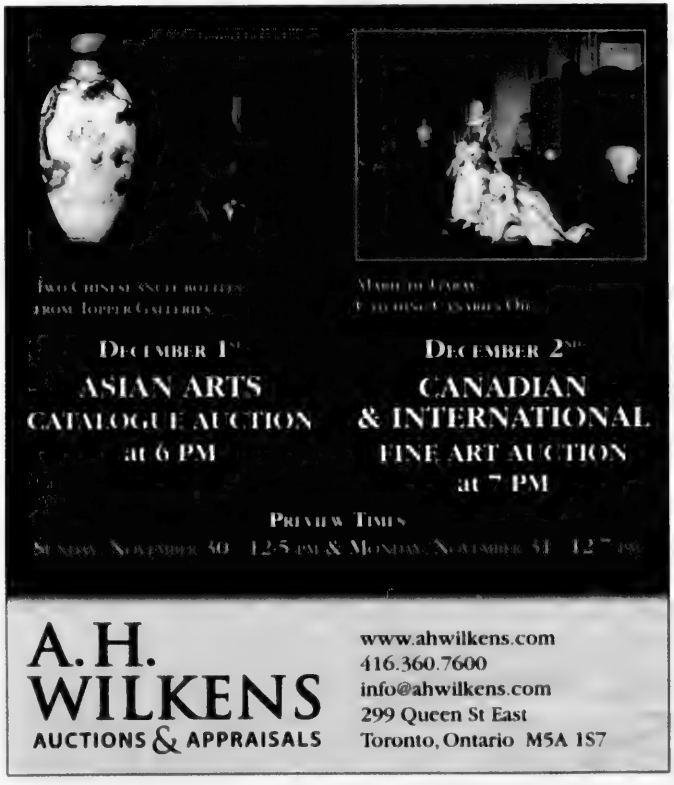
Kay replied that he sensed it was people on the left who felt particularly attacked due to "the combination of the Tories being in power and the mainstream, muscularly pro-Zionist community being empowered by that," as well as "the rhetorical factors that created the line of 'If you're not for Netanyahu, maybe you're on the wrong side of the war on terror.'"

Sucharov said CIJA has been accused of partisanship because of "the tone it has helped promote – though CIJA didn't create the tone – which says there's only one way to engage with Israel and to be a loyal Jewish community member," and that CIJA tapped into the Conservatives' "binary view of the world," which included a "Likud-led Israel as the right way to proceed."

Sucharov, who said she's often called "a self-loathing Jew," noted "quiet corners of shunning" in the community, such as when parents in a bar and bat mitzvah group she recently organized told her they didn't feel comfortable with having her in their home because of a column she wrote on Israel.

Lefton said CIJA encourages diverse opinions, but draws a line at boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel. "Our starting point is that we want to work with groups who believe in the existence of Israel as a Jewish state, and we won't work with groups who threaten that," she said.

Swartz said Peace Now opposes BDS, but supports labelling goods from the territories, which it sees as "a counterweight to BDS, because then we clearly demarcate sovereign Israel from the occupied territories, and we want people to buy goods from Israel." ■



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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 19, 2015

Anti-domestic violence group names first male chair

SHERI SHEFA
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For the first time in its history, Act To End Violence Against Women (ATEVAW), a non-profit organization that serves women victims of domestic abuse, appointed a man to sit as chair of the board.

Mark Anshan, a lawyer with more than 25 years experience helping government agencies, non-profit and for-profit organizations, said having a man serving in this role sends a message to the community that this is more than a women's issue.

"This particular subject is a societal issue. It is not an issue that only women should be concerned about. We should all be concerned about it and involved in it. Since, I think, in some sectors of our society and life it is somewhat male-dominated in terms of policy making and influencing outcomes, it is important for men to step up and get involved in issues that are causing severe heartache and problems within our community," Anshan said.

Penny Krowitz, executive director of ATEVAW, which works mostly, but not exclusively, with Jewish women and operates a kosher women's shelter, said that although this is a noteworthy development, Anshan's appointment didn't raise many eyebrows within the organization.

"We all recognize that men need to be involved, walking with women and working with women, to solve this issue," Krowitz said.

"One of the huge skills that Mark brings to the table, in addition to his vast community involvement – currently he's on boards of other organizations – he has also worked in government on policy. He has a number of connections to government, and understands how government works. In the coming months we hope to meet with different ministers and different people in government whose roles will have, or could have, an impact on the issue of violence – the minister of justice, the minister of health."

Krowitz added that she is confident Anshan will help ATEVAW advocate for women who are victims of domestic violence and educate people who have influence in the government to better understand what it is like for people who are struggling to break free from a life of violence.

"There's a cost to society when it comes to violence against women. I think the government is becoming sensitive to it. There is a huge cost to society in terms of welfare

Mark Anshan

agencies and social services and health care," said Anshan, who served as director and treasurer for the Micah Homes Non-Profit Housing Corporation owned by Holy Blossom Temple, during the planning and construction of a housing project for disadvantaged single-parent families.

He said educating the community about violence against women and removing the stigma associated with it is essential to solving the issue.

"Think of other social issues that have occurred over decades or generations, for example, homosexuality. There was a time when that was taboo and no one talked about it. People who were gay felt they were living in an unsafe environment and couldn't come forward. Now that has changed dramatically," he said.

"It's the same thing here. When people feel like they have a safe environment and a safe society, they can come forward and seek help and deal with their issues, and the greater community is accepting that this needs to be dealt with. That probably goes a long way to solving the problem earlier on, with early intervention, so women aren't physically or psychologically hurt for a longer period of time. The sooner you can help them, the sooner they can get on with their lives."

Krowitz said although leadership roles within the group are now open to men, the focus of its work is still solely on women. "I don't deny that men are abused. That is a fact and we know that, but our expertise and our work is with women."

Anshan said his goal is a society that doesn't need this kind of a service. "If we could ultimately solve the big problem that we're dealing with, organizations like this shouldn't have to exist. Governments shouldn't have to expend resources to bring in new policies, new legislation, for this very serious problem. So until you get there, we have to do all we can to get to that point, which means advocacy, education and helping on an individual basis." ■

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Reform to focus on inclusion, social justice, leader says

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"Audacious hospitality" and social justice are among the key priorities that the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), which represents and supports Reform Jewish congregations and communities primarily in North America and Israel, is focusing on going forward.

On the heels of its 2015 biennial meeting, held in Florida in early November and attended by about 5,000 Reform Jewish leaders from around North America and Israel, the president of the New York City-based URJ, Rabbi Rick Jacobs, will be visiting Ontario Nov. 20 to 22.

He'll be meeting with several local congregations and sharing some of the highlights of the biennial, which establishes the URJ's agenda for the year, and what he said were "critical and exciting opportunities we have to strengthen Jewish life here in North America."

In addition to finding ways to keep people already involved in Reform Judaism engaged across generations, Rabbi Jacobs said the movement will be looking for avenues to open doors to those interested in becoming involved.

For example, Reform is conscious of being inclusive of those who might not otherwise feel included in Jewish institutional spaces such as synagogues. "The idea of 'audacious hospitality' extends to LGBT people, millennials, people with disabilities, and looks at how we can help move people from the periphery to the centre, to meet people where they are," he said.

Further, he stressed the movement's intention to welcome interfaith couples and families. He pointed to recent research from Brandeis University showing that millennials raised in interfaith families who've been brought up in synagogues and Jewish youth movements often show a strong commitment to, and knowledge of, Judaism.

"So interfaith inclusion and outreach works. It changes the demographic trajectory for a Jewish life. Since the late 1970s, our movement has showed that when we do outreach to interfaith families well, it succeeds," Rabbi Jacobs said.

He clarified that the URJ supports the right of individual rabbis to make up their minds about officiating at interfaith weddings, and while in Canada, Reform rabbis have largely decided not to do so, in the United States, it's a question that each rabbi confronts.

"We're clear that no matter a rabbi's stance on officiating, there are concrete ways that we as a Reform community can draw close [interfaith] families and not make them feel they're outside of Jewish life," he said.

Rabbi Rick Jacobs

In addition to inclusion, Rabbi Jacobs emphasized social justice as a fundamental URJ priority, one that both brings people into Jewish life and fulfils the Torah obligation to "love thy neighbour."

American Reform congregations have been part of the push to get the U.S. Congress to raise the number of refugees it allows into the country, he said.

When the Syrian refugee crisis became a major public issue earlier this year, Rabbi Jacobs said Canadian Reform congregations were "visionary in their response," showing a real commitment to sponsoring refugee families.

"I've spoken about, and will speak in Canada about, tikkun olam as the largest gateway for most Jewish people to come into Jewish life... We're looking at how Jewish life doesn't just make social activism possible but can really inspire it... Like, say, if a commitment caring for refugees is sustained by a Shabbat experience that renews one's optimism and commitment to Judaism."

He said traditional Judaism too often leaves out tikkun olam, and the URJ believes it's important to integrate the latter into spiritual and communal Jewish life.

"It's sometimes only about not leaving chametz out or kashrut... But we're looking at, how do we make society kosher? We want to be engaging not just to young people searching for spiritual identity but also to people looking for more meaning and depth in their daily lives."

Rabbi Jacobs will be giving a keynote address at a community Shabbat Nov. 20 at Temple Sinai Congregation. On Nov. 21, he'll be at Solel Congregation in Mississauga to install Rabbi Audrey Pollock as its new senior rabbi. Later that day, he'll travel to Temple Anshe Sholom in Hamilton, and on Nov. 22, he'll speak at Holy Blossom Temple, and later in the day, he'll visit Oakville's Shaarei Beth-El. ■

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Jewish man wins rights case against Jewish boss

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Richard Zilberg, right, with Fo Niemi
JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

The Quebec human rights commission has upheld a Jewish hairdresser's complaint that he was discriminated against by his Jewish employer because he was forced not to work on Shabbat.

It's believed to be the first time the commission has ruled on, or possibly even heard, a case of a dispute between parties of the same religion.

Richard Zilberg, who was a stylist and colourist at Spa OraZen on Queen Mary Road, went to the Quebec Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission after he was fired allegedly for not complying with the owners' demand that he cease coming in to work on Friday evenings and Saturdays.

The business is open at that time, but its observant principal owner Iris Gressy, who is named in the complaint, does not work there on Shabbat.

The commission recommended on Oct. 6 that Zilberg be compensated by the spa for damages totalling $2,000 to $12,500 for material damages for loss of income and other hardship, and $5,000 for moral damages. An additional $2,500 was also awarded for punitive damages for intentional violation of his civil rights.

The spa owners didn't comply with a subpoena to appear before the commission and didn't otherwise respond to its investigators, said Fo Niemi, executive director of CRARR (the Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations, a non-profit organization founded in 1983 to advocate for victims of discrimination and promote tolerance.)

The spa did not pay Zilberg the recommended damages by the Oct. 23 deadline, and the case will now go before the Quebec Human Rights Tribunal, which is a court.

Zilberg appeared with Niemi at a Nov. 10 press conference to discuss the case. CRARR has been helping Zilberg navigate the commission process.

"When I as a Jew am discriminated against by another Jew, to the point of losing my job, income and dignity, that is completely intolerable," Zilberg stated. "There is no excuse for discrimination based on religion, even if that person is of the same faith."

Zilberg, who has about 30 years experience in hairdressing in Montreal and Ottawa, was hired by the spa in October 2011. He worked an average 30 hours a week, usually including on Saturday, because it was one of the busiest days.

He told the commission that in July 2011 the owners (Gressy had a partner at the time) told him verbally he was no longer allowed to work on Shabbat because he's Jewish, and Jews aren't permitted by their religion to work at that time. They justified keeping the spa open on Shabbat to him by saying that profits were given to charity. Non-Jewish employees continued to work as before.

Zilberg, who stressed that he is proud of his Jewish faith, although he is not Shomer Shabbat, said he was shocked and angered by this change in policy. It meant a reduction in his working hours as well as an affront to his religious freedom. He complied in order to keep his job.

He alleges his dismissal a month later was because he expressed his feelings of unfairness to several of the spa's numerous Jewish customers. He understands that at least one of them then mentioned this disapprovingly to the owners.

The owners, he said, had warned him not to discuss this matter with the clientele and to just say Saturday was now his day off.

He is aware of only one other Jewish employee at the spa during the time he was there, he said, a young woman assisting in the tanning salon. She apparently was also told not to come in on Shabbat, so she quit, he said.

Zilberg said that not only did he lose his job, but also most of his clients. Today, he works at another salon. He filed the complaint with the commission in December 2012. He initially didn't know where, or if, he should take action against what he believed was a clear case of discrimination on the basis of religion. "Deep down I knew this was not right, but I didn't know the law or what my options were," he said.

Zilberg said his dismissal hurt him financially and psychologically, and even affected his health. He said he agreed to speak out publicly because he wants others to know about their rights and recourse if they are infringed upon.

Niemi, a co-founder of CRARR, said this is the first case of "intrafaith" discrimination he is aware of coming before the commission. It's also be one of the few cases involving Jewish individuals brought before the tribunal in the last 20 years, Niemi said.

The tribunal will likely first try to mediate a settlement, Niemi said. If it can't, the case will go to trial and it will probably be months before a decision is reached. ■

Kristallnacht event marks Philippine rescue of Jews

MYRON LOVE
PRARIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

From left, Larry and Tova Vickar, Rod Cantiveros and Joel Lazar with a plaque commemorating the Philippines' rescue of German and Austrian Jews MYRON LOVE PHOTO

On Nov. 9, Winnipeg's Jewish community once again commemorated Kristallnacht – the "Night of Broken Glass – the infamous night in 1938 when the Nazis ratcheted up the violence and persecution of Germany's Jewish community to a new level. But this year, the program focused on a different part of the world: the Philippines.

"At a time when everything looked so bleak, particularly for the Jewish communities in Germany and Austria, when all countries doors were closed to them, there was a light in the East," said Shelley Faintuch, community relations director for the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg and associate director of local partner services for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. "It was only the Philippines that was prepared to offer a haven to Jews fleeing Nazi persecution."

It was a full house as the Jewish community was joined by 50 representatives of Winnipeg's 70,000-strong Filipino community at the Berney Theatre to commemorate Kristallnacht and thank the Philippines for saving some 1,200 to 1,300 German and Austrian Jews in 1939.

The short version of what happened – as shown in the documentary *Rescue in the Philippines* – was that the rescue was a joint effort of Manuel Quezon, the first president of the Philippines; American High Commissioner Paul McNutt, who defied the U.S. State Department by issuing U.S. visas to Jews trying to leave Germany and Austria; Col. (later Gen.) Dwight Eisenhower, the U.S. military commander in the Philippines (which had been under American rule until about five years earlier); and five Jewish American brothers – the Frieder brothers, who were based in Cincinnati, but had extensive business interests in the Philippines. The brothers were also the recognized leaders of the pre-war Manila Jewish community, which numbered about 50, mainly American, families.

While the Philippines was prepared to welcome many more Jewish refugees – up to 30,000, as the documentary noted –rescue efforts ended suddenly with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and subsequent Japanese conquest of the Philippines. Fortunately for the Jewish refugees, their German and Austrian passports protected them from the Japanese forces, who viewed them as citizens of an allied country. Their lives were only endangered when the Japanese went on a killing spree near war's end.

The hour-long film was the central feature of the Kristallnacht program. It was preceded by short remarks by Jewish Federation of Winnipeg president David Kroft and Orli Marcelino, consul general of the Philippines in Winnipeg. As well, memorial candles were lit prior to the screening.

The Philippines' role in providing a safe haven for German and Austrian Jews has been little known up to now, not only in the wider world, but even among Filipinos. "I could find very few articles about this," said Faintuch, who organized the Kristallnacht program with assistant Rhonda Prepes.

Even Rod Cantiveros, co-chair for the evening along with longtime friend Larry Vickar, didn't know about the episode until long after coming to Canada in 1975.

"I taught history at the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines before coming to Canada," said the founding editor of Winnipeg's *Filipino Journal*. "I knew that the Japanese had turned the university into a concentration camp and that some Jewish refugees were interned there. But the rescue of Jewish refugees was never taught as part of Philippine history. It is a missing chapter in our history."

Cantiveros first learned about the rescue efforts in the 1990s, when his late wife wrote an article about it. He has since read a memoir by one of the children of those Jewish refugees. He noted that in the 1990s, a monument was erected in Rishon Lezion to mark the Philippines' rescue efforts, with the grandson of Manuel Quezon in attendance.

Vickar, a business and community leader, has long been a supporter of Winnipeg's Filipino community and has also funded projects in the Philippines (and Israel). "The Jewish community owes the Philippines a vote of thanks for being righteous among the nations," he said.

The evening concluded with Vickar and Cantiveros jointly unveiling a plaque recognizing the Philippines for providing shelter to German and Austrian Jews in 1939. ■

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GUEST VOICE

It's time to bring back Canadian Jewish Congress

Zach Paikin and James Gutman

In the recent federal election, we witnessed the continuation of a trend that has been apparent within Canada's Jewish community for the past several years: division between the left and the right.

Division isn't a bad thing when it is accompanied by meaningful and respectful dialogue. The problem today is that our community is in the midst of a dialogue of the deaf. There is very little overlap between the policy priorities, general worldviews and public pronouncements of the Canadian Jewish left and right.

Our community is in need of a political institution that can unite Jewish Canadians from across the spectrum. Instead of polarization and cacophony, we need a vehicle that truly reflects our community's diversity. That is why we are calling for the re-establishment of an elected Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC).

For most of its history, the CJC was a truly democratic and representative organization. Just like Canada itself, the organization was a parliamentary democracy formed of several regional components. Each region was allocated a certain number of representatives based on the size of their local Jewish population.

Every three years, elections would be held, in which every member of the Jewish community – above the age of 18 and in good standing with their local United Jewish Appeal – would vote for their representatives on the CJC executive. The executive was, in effect, the Canadian Jewish community's parliament.

In its heyday, the executive boasted nearly 160 individuals. On a triennial cycle, it would meet in a plenary session to vote for the CJC's officers, which included a president, a chair and sitting representative officers of each region. This smaller group of officers ran the day-to-day affairs of the CJC, while ultimately remaining accountable to the executive.

Later on in its history, after the CJC was incorporated into the umbrella organization that would eventually become known as the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), its democratic component largely faded away. This was an unfortunate development, as it gave grounds for many to criticize the organization as being too focused on progressive causes and not enough on Israel- and Jewish-specific issues.

Similarly, many progressive and centrist Jews believe today that their community's leading advocacy organizations are too Israel-centric and thus unrepresentative of the political diversity of Canadian Jewry. This is why the re-establishment of an elected, democratic CJC is so important. We need to build a Jewish community in which all feel welcome.

If we fail to bring our community's present-day polarization to an end, there could be significant long-term consequences. Growing numbers of Jewish Canadians will feel increasingly alienated from their community's leadership and institutions, an alienation they may pass on to the next generation. Some may end up feeling the divide so strongly that they will fail to give their children a Jewish education.

In much of the Diaspora, preserving and nourishing Jewish identity is one of our community's paramount and most difficult challenges. Community is one of the bedrocks of Jewish life. We cannot let our personal ideological preferences get in the way of building a Canadian Jewish community that will remain strong, welcoming and forward-looking over the long term.

Do not misunderstand our position: the work that CIJA does on Israel-related and other issues is professional, important and needs to continue. The connection between Canadian Jewry and Israel is strong, and we need an organization that will help to ensure that the Canada-Israel friendship remains a durable one.

But ultimately, for the sake of the long-term health of the Canadian Jewish community, we need to establish an advocacy organization that is democratic, multi-faceted and representative of our community's many voices and passions. Our community can band together to tackle domestic and international issues, in accordance with both spiritual and secular values. Our love for Israel and our devotion to other causes need not be mutually exclusive.

The choice with which our community is presented is clear. If both left-leaning and right-leaning Jewish Canadians continue to place ideology over unity, then public perception of our community will worsen, and the pillars that support it will weaken. We need to recognize and embrace our community's diversity of opinion, and channel that diversity into something rich and positive with the help of a truly representative institution.

We need to bring back an elected, democratic Canadian Jewish Congress. ■

Zach Paikin is a columnist for The Hill Times. James Gutman is a Jewish educator and community organizer.

Kamloops JCC organizes activities for community

Kamloops kids decorate masks for Purim.

First of a six-part series on small Jewish communities across Canada.

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Kamloops, a town of about 90,000 people in the arid interior of British Columbia, boasts a first-class hospital, a university, dozens of churches, but no synagogue or rabbi, despite the presence of probably hundreds of Jews in the region. Seven years ago, about 50 local Jewish families joined together to form the Jewish Community Centre of Kamloops.

The JCCK has no bricks-and-mortar headquarters, but it has plenty of enthusiasm. Its president is Heidi Coleman, a fundraising professional who arrived from Montreal three years ago when she accepted a professional posting as CEO of the Royal Inland Hospital Foundation. When JCCK members found that she has a strong Jewish background and could read Hebrew, they asked her to become president.

Jews in large cities may find it difficult to imagine living without the Jewish infrastructure we usually take for granted. But in Kamloops, those who want a kosher brisket may have to drive to Kelowna or Vancouver, two and four hours away, respectively.

The Target store in Kamloops used to sell dreidels at Chanukah, but it closed, so there's no local supplier for dreidels – nor for menorahs, Shabbat candles, Hebrew books or other necessities and accoutrements of Jewish life. People travel frequently to Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Israel, and bring back supplies. Kosher wine, however, may be ordered locally at British Columbia Liquor Commission outlets.

The Jewish community arranges Friday night dinners, Shabbatons and communal holiday meals in people's homes. "For the High Holidays, we just did a nice Rosh Hashanah dinner at a couple's house," Coleman said. "The focus is very much on the kids. The parents want their children to learn about and understand what the holidays are about, and why we blow the shofar and dip the honey.

"On Yom Kippur, people were on their own. We didn't have a formal break of the fast. People who wanted to go to synagogue drove to Kelowna."

On Sukkot, the Jewish families organized a meal in a sukkah on a farm – "definitely different, but great." Last Passover, they made a seder in a restaurant that brought in matzah. In years past, various people have shared in the cooking. "One guy wanted to do a Passover seder on campus with his friends, so I lent him some Haggadot."

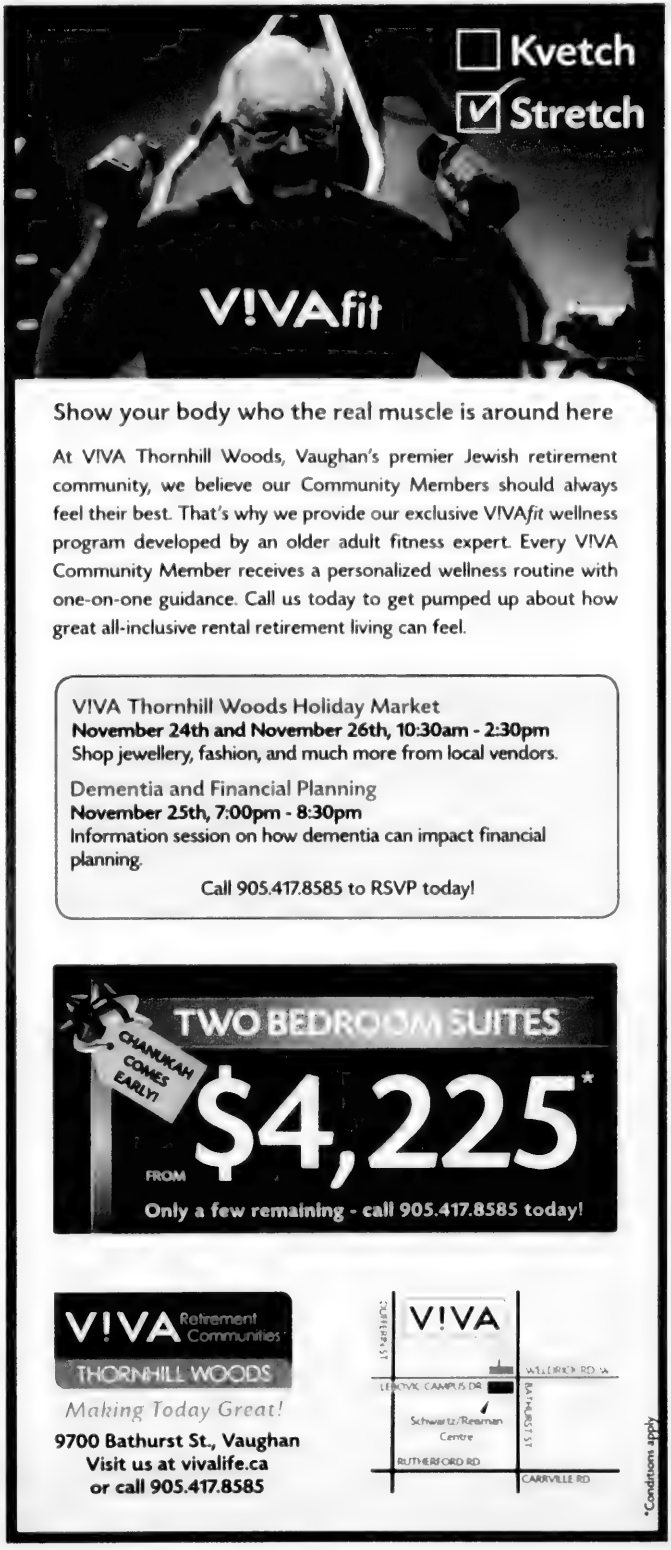
A former director of UJA in Ottawa and a more recent fundraiser for a Montreal hospital, Coleman said that the Royal Inland Hospital has attracted a number of Jewish doctors from Toronto and Vancouver, and Thompson River University has likewise attracted a range of academics from various cities.

"Kamloops is just a small town with no traffic. A lot of people come here to get away from the rush of the big city, the housing prices and the traffic."

The JCCK executive meets monthly to plan cultural events such as Jewish-themed lectures and movie screenings. They're no less active when it comes to tzedakah and tikkun olam. Recently, the Jewish community began fundraising with other groups to support two families of Syrian refugees at a cost of $15,000 per family. They're due to arrive within four to six months.

Coleman hasn't encountered any local anti-Semitism, but says there is an anti-Israel campaign emanating from the large Arab contingent at the university. "UIA Canada has brought in good lecturers, and the lectures are well attended. Pro and anti people go and ask questions. Overall, I find there's a great love of Israel here. You do see some anti-Israel expression on campus, but nothing strong and nothing that permeates the city."

As JCCK president, she has been asked to lecture on "Judaism 101" to a seniors group later this year. She's also assisting a Catholic church group to plan an interfaith trip to Israel. "We're much more visible in the community in the past three years, so I've been told," she said. ■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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 19, 2015

Holy Blossom panel to explore Jewish-Muslim relations

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Karen Mock, former CEO of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, former national director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada and a member of Holy Blossom Temple, says her email inbox is often full of messages from Jewish people who "spread stereotypes and promote fear of Muslims and Arabs, and of Islam in general."

Jews know the impact of prejudice and stereotyping probably more than any other people, Mock stressed, so, "recognizing and countering Islamophobia – the Muslim equivalent to anti-Semitism – should be a priority for our community."

Mock is one of several speakers who will be participating in an interfaith panel at Holy Blossom Nov. 26 about Jewish-Muslim relations.

Titled "We Refuse to Be Enemies," the event is being presented by Holy Blossom and *The CJN*. In addition to Mock, it will feature Holy Blossom's associate rabbi, Michael Satz; *CJN* editor Yoni Goldstein,; Shahid Akhtar, founding co-chair of the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims; and Alia Hogben, executive director of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women.

Rabbi Michael Satz

Mock, who helped the synagogue co-ordinate the event, said she recommended Akhtar and Hogben as speakers because of their experience with, and commitment to, interfaith dialogue, as well as to ensure gender balance on the panel.

She said planning for the event began as anti-Muslim feeling in Canada spread, triggered by the recent debate about women wearing the niqab during the Canadian citizenship swearing-in ceremony.

Rabbi Satz said Holy Blossom has a long history of working with other religious groups and wants to show that Muslims and Jews in Canada are "in this together" and need to find common ground in order to make the community and the world a better place.

Hogben, whose organization promotes equality and empowerment for Canadian Muslim women, said it uses education, interfaith programming and distribution of resource kits to fight issues such as domestic violence and to help Muslim women integrate into mainstream Canadian society.

Further, it seeks to educate people about the organization's interpretation of Islam as a religion that believes in equality, social justice and compassion.

"I'm honoured to be invited to the synagogue. That they would invite and welcome a Canadian Muslim woman, I think that's pretty wonderful, and I think it's crucial that people of faith come together. There are differences between us, but it's important to build on the similarities and see what we can do to work together," Hogben said.

Mock emphasized that while anti-Muslim feelings in the Jewish community sometimes occur in response to events in the Middle East, the conflict in Israel is "political, not religious," and that for Jewish-Muslim dialogue programs to be effective, it's important to put aside political issues initially, until people have developed a relationship.

"Later, we find ways to help non-Jews understand the centrality of Israel to many Jews in the Diaspora and at the same time acknowledge that criticism of Israeli policies and practices is not anti-Semitic. We help both sides to understand the contexts [of where the other is coming from] and also how to recognize when that criticism becomes vilification and crosses the line into anti-Semitism."

Ultimately, she said, it's important for people of all faiths to work together to defeat terrorism and the promotion of all forms of discrimination and hatred.

"Jewish people have been at the forefront of this kind of work and should take a leadership role in assisting people to know their neighbours and to promote the idea that most Muslims hold the same ideals we do. It's the extremists that we need to marginalize – in all communities," Mock said. ■

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Ve'ahavta gala honours leaders and humanitarians

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

From left, Bernie Farber, Avrum Rosensweig, Carol and Jeff Grosman, Patti Falus, Susie Sokol, Kathy Laszlo, Michael Dan, Hedy Bohm and Shad DAVID A. FITZPATRICK (DFM SERVICES) PHOTO

Until a few years ago, Bob, 40, never imagined he would be homeless, but a personal crisis launched him into a tailspin that saw him experience serious psychological and financial straits, including homelessness.

A housing counsellor recommended he apply for the Ve'ahavta Street Academy (VSA), an eight-week program geared to marginally housed and vulnerable individuals. One of a number of programs Ve'ahavta runs to help vulnerable people, the VSA provides pre-employment and life skills as a way to reduce marginalization, social isolation and long-term unemployment.

Bob said he'd been looking for "a positive way out," and the VSA, which he completed last year, gave him just that.

By the time he graduated, he had secured stable employment as venue support staff at an event space, a job he still holds today.

Bob was one of more than 600 guests who attended Ve'ahavta's Starry Nights Tikkun Olam Awards Ceremony, held at Koerner Hall Nov. 12 to celebrate individuals the organization has identified as community leaders and humanitarians, and raise money for Ve'ahavta programs.

"I came tonight because I wanted to be in touch with the organization that has helped me so much and see what kind of role I can play with them in future," Bob said.

The event included a dinner reception, addresses by community figures such as Bernie Farber, Ve'ahavta chair; Consul General of Israel DJ Schneeweiss; and Avrum Rosensweig, president and CEO of Ve'ahavta, as well as a live auction, the presentation of various awards and performances by bands Digging Roots and Jaffa Road.

The master of ceremony for the evening was Shad, a Canadian hip-hop artist and host of the CBC Radio One program *q*.

The recipients of the Tikkun Olam awards were as follows:

- The Emerging Leader award went to Laura Grosman, a young woman who, at age 18, drafted a private member's bill in Parliament to have Canada build a national Holocaust monument.
- The Humanitarian award went to Kathy Laszlo and Susie Sukol, co-founders of DANI, an organization that creates opportunities for young adults with physical and/or cognitive challenges.
- The Bridging Community award went to Patti Falus, president of CEO of Barter Network, a business-to-business trading network.
- The Lasting Legacy award went to Holocaust survivor Hedy Bohm, who has shared her story of survival with thousands of young people.
- The Community Visionary award went to Michael Dan, a philanthropist and former neurosurgeon who in 2014 donated $10 million to the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health to create an institute that will study health issues in Canada's aboriginal population.

Rosensweig, who founded Ve'ahavta, said the gala helps raise about one-third of the organization's overall budget, and this year it raised around $550,000. "When you have a gala like this... it becomes like a family where you're all celebrating the same thing – in this case that's tikkun olam – repairing the world – and Ve'ahavta... To see that something I started up 19 years ago still exists and that it exists in such a beautiful way, that's so special to me personally," he said.

Shad told *The CJN* that the gala was the first Jewish community event he's hosted.

"I'm a religious person myself, so I always appreciate when people make that connection between their faith and where they came from and the world at large, as well as seeing the imperative to contribute something positive." ■

WE REFUSE TO BE ENEMIES:
A Panel Discussion Exploring
JEWISH-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Thursday, November 26, 7:30 pm
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Rabbi Michael Satz
Holy Blossom Temple

Yoni Goldstein
Editor of The Canadian Jewish News

Karen Mock
Former National Director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith

Shahid Akhtar
Founding Co-Chair, Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims

Alia Hogben
Executive Director of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women

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GUEST VOICE

An eight-point plan to help Syrian refugees

Michael Diamond

There are considerable risks in bringing large numbers of Syrian refugees to Canada without due care. Those risks arise from the fact that these refugees would be chosen from a group that has lived in a part of the world where many have been taught to despise the West, Israel, Jews and Christians and to consider violence an acceptable approach to achieving one's goals.

And while our hearts naturally go out to the innocents among them, especially the children who are the biggest losers in the Syrian debacle, it is not just children we are looking to include in the 25,000 refugees Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has committed to bringing into Canada over the next short period. It is adults, too, most peace loving and good people, some perhaps not.

The government requires institutions or individuals who wish to adopt a refugee family of four to raise $27,000 to cover first-year costs. Those costs do not include medical and dental care, nor the costs of education and the like. Accordingly, the cost to support a refugee family of four will be many times higher than $27,000 per annum over time. Canadians appear to be open to that investment, but should be made aware of the costs.

Given the moral and now political inevitability of accepting refugees, the question becomes: how can the federal government do so in a way that reduces the risk of discord and danger to Canadian citizens?

We only need to see the impact of massive immigration, poorly managed, in Europe – the costs in terms of dollars, social upheaval, discord, and in some cases death and injury are material and only getting worse. To avoid that outcome, I believe a focus on risk reduction is required. The responsibility of any government is, first, to the security and safety of the people it represents, and only then to humankind in general. This government intends to admit large numbers of refugees – it has an obligation to take our security into account in how it does so.

The government should follow these rules to reduce risk:

1. Don't be in a hurry. Do the job properly, or don't do it at all. It benefits no one – and it endangers Canadians – to bring refugees to a new place and cast them adrift without a clear plan of integration.

2. Choose only families with young children. Their children are at the greatest risk, present the least risk, and have the most to gain from a move to Canada.

> *The responsibility of any government is, first, to the security and safety of the people it represents*

3. Review the background of adult refugees, including parents, carefully. Look for associations with jihadist or extremist groups. If identity is unclear, avoid those people. Any sense of bad association must eliminate the possibility of admission to Canada.

4. Do not afford refugees the right to bring additional family members to Canada. Let's not "double up" with a commitment to add to the challenges if things don't go well. If things go well, those rules can always be relaxed.

5. Ensure that every family is adopted by institutions or individuals. An adopted family is far more likely to be successful in Canada, and therefore happy and productive, not angry and/or violent.

6. Reduce the $27,000 barrier to adopting a family of four. The government should match moneys raised dollar for dollar, in order to achieve the desired outcome of maximizing the number of adopted families.

7. Choose from groups that are most at risk. Yazidis, Christians and Kurds are at the greatest risk, because they are aggressively persecuted by the Muslim majority in many refugee camps.

8. Where refugees are Muslims, ensure they specifically agree to live among Jews and Christians under Canadian, not sharia, law.

We need a refugee program that is sensible, that involves Canadians directly (as was the case with the Vietnamese boat people), that provides government support, and that moves only at a pace which allows for processes that minimize the risk. If we do this properly, Canada can set the example for the world. If we do not, we must hold this government accountable for putting haste ahead of our safety. ■

Michael Diamond is a business consultant, entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist. He is involved extensively in Jewish and non-Jewish community life and sits on or chairs several boards and committees of a number of non-profit organizations.

Early marriages seen in talmudic times, expert says

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Tirzah Meacham

Marrying off young girls occurred among Jewish families in the mishnaic and talmudic periods.

Tirzah Meacham, associate professor of near and Middle Eastern civilizations at the University of Toronto, made the point Nov. 10 at a conference titled "The Jewish Family," sponsored by the Jewish Law Association, U of T's Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies and York University's Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies. It was held at U of T and attended by several dozen people.

Meacham's was among the handful of presentations by academics from around North America who gathered to discuss intersections between Jewish and civil law, including gender relations, marriage and divorce.

Meacham, whose research includes talmudic and rabbinic literature, and Judaism and feminism, discussed conflicts between Halachah and civil law on the age of marriage.

She countered an argument made by Bar-Ilan University professor Adiel Schremer, who claimed that in Jewish Palestine of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, girls married well into their teens, while in surrounding cultures, such as Babylonia, they married around age 13.

Meacham said Schremer's study relied on tombstone inscriptions found in Rome, Hellenistic Egypt and Palestine, which noted a woman's marital age. This evidence is problematic, Meacham argued, because graves of middle and lower class Jews were likely marked with less detail, limiting the "sample size" to wealthy families.

She said the Torah says a Jewish father had the right to marry off his daughter from her day of birth until what was considered the age of majority – "12 years, six months and a day." Only if a daughter became widowed or divorced did a father lose the right to marry her to another man.

The multitude of mishnaic and Toseftim texts that discuss issues related to the marriage of female minors – including virginity, hymeneal and menstrual blood – indicate, Meacham argued, that "we must conclude that marriage of younger girls existed in the mishnaic and talmudic periods."

She said the typical age of betrothal, if not marriage, was probably before 12-1/2. After that age, a father lost the authority to annul his daughter's vows and the legal right to her handiwork or profits she brought to the household, including the bride price.

"Because a father was obligated, at least morally, to provide a daughter's dowry [even beyond age 12]… it's likely that in situations of marginal economics, the father would use the bride price to help dower his daughter," Meacham said. This means that families not part of elite or rabbinic circles likely married off daughters before 13, and rabbinic discussion suggests that even some in the latter camp sometimes did.

Meacham said the problem has persisted, in some ways, in contemporary Israel, noting some ultra-Orthodox groups' resistance several years ago to Israel changing its legal age of marriage from 17 to 18.

She closed with a question: "What do we do about an ancient legal practice that's halachically binding but against civil law and all norms about child welfare?" ■

Canada's oldest Reform shul celebrates 165 years

ABIGAIL CUKIER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, HAMILTON

At 165 years old, Temple Anshe Sholom is Canada's oldest Reform congregation, and its clergy and lay leadership weren't going to let the anniversary pass without a celebration.

The Hamilton, Ont., synagogue started over a store on James Street South in 1850, when the city's 16 Jewish families formed the Hebrew Benevolent Society Anshe Sholom of Hamilton. They purchased land for a cemetery and incorporated in 1863. In 1882, they built the city's first synagogue at 143 Hughson St. S. In 1952, they raised funds and built a new shul at the corner of King Street West and what was then called Cline Crescent. They added a new wing, including a school section, in 1963.

Temple Anshe Sholom still stands there today.

"There have been challenging times, but that vision of coming together as a congregation has always been important," said Ginny Jones, who has been a member for 27 years. "To come together and learn together is our mandate. There is a real commitment to being a community, being a congregation."

Jones is on the committee for the temple's anniversary celebration, to be held Nov. 21. It will include a 3 p.m. service in the main sanctuary with guest Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, followed by a kiddush. At 6 p.m., will be a black-tie optional evening of cocktails, dinner and dancing at Liuna Station at 360 James St. N. The gala will also celebrate the 95th birthday of Rabbi Bernard Baskin and Rabbi Jordan Cohen's 25th year as a pulpit rabbi. Proceeds will benefit the temple, including the dedication of the main sanctuary in honour of Rabbi Baskin's birthday.

Rabbi Baskin led the congregation from 1949 to 1989, and under his leadership, the congregation grew from 100 to 475 families. Rabbi Baskin, a former long-time *CJN* books columnist, is widely recognized for his interfaith work, for which he received a B'nai Brith Humanitarian Award. He was also voted into the Hamilton Gallery of Distinction, and received an honorary doctor of laws degree from McMaster University and an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. As the temple's rabbi emeritus, he has remained very active in the community and is a highly respected speaker and writer.

Hamilton's Temple Anshe Shalom

"So many have looked to Rabbi Baskin over the years as not only an inspiration, but a bit of a guide," Jones said. "He has an enormous following, and not just in the Jewish community. He has tremendous intellect but always made his messages very simple and accessible."

After Rabbi Baskin retired, Rabbi Irwin Zeplowitz followed. During his tenure, he hired a full-time educator and worked to revitalize the school. He introduced the increased use of Hebrew, as well as innovations to make services and ritual observance more engaging for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Nine years ago, Rabbi Jordan Cohen took over the pulpit. He leads with the values of education, social justice, egalitarianism and congregational participation in prayer and leadership. The congregation stands today at about 350 families.

"There is a strong sense of the temple's history. We have five-generation families and members who have grown up here. There is a wonderful sense of connection," Rabbi Cohen said. "History can be weighty, with the mindset of 'we've always done it that way' while battling changes in Reform Judaism. We have to try to facilitate the exciting and progressive changes in our movement while honouring that history."

And while celebrating this momentous anniversary, the temple isn't resting on its laurels. Jones said a vision committee has worked with the congregation to create a 10-year plan for the synagogue.

"We are intentional about working toward that vision, of being inclusive, active and engaging," she said. "We really have a lot of reasons to celebrate." ■

For information on the gala or to contribute to the tribute book, visit celebrate165.com, or call 905-528-0121.

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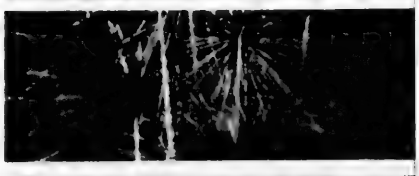

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Cancer survivor raises funds for chemotherapy research

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Yaron Panov was diagnosed with an aggressive and rare form of cancer, he was given six months to live.

In searching for treatment options for his soft tissue sarcoma, Panov and his wife, Dr. Rochelle Schwartz, discovered Champions Oncology, an innovative, precision chemotherapy program based in Baltimore and Israel.

Champions implanted Panov's tumour cells and surrounding tissue into mice avatars, and then different chemotherapy drugs were tested on them. The course of treatment most effective on these mouse tumours was then used for Panov.

Fast forward 5-1/2 years, and Panov was telling his story at a fundraiser on Oct. 28 that kicked off the campaign for the Panov 2 sarcoma research initiative at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

"Against all odds, I saw my sons graduate," Panov told the 85 people who gathered at the home of Barry and Varda Feiner that evening. "Maybe I'll see my sons get married and I'll even meet my grandchildren."

Many of the people in attendance were major donors to the first Panov program for targeted chemotherapy. They were on hand to celebrate, because the campaign to raise $1 million for the Panov Program for Precision Chemotherapy had just reached its goal, and its first clinical research initiative was about to get started.

Yaron Panov and Dr. Rochelle Schwartz

The study, which will identify precision chemotherapy treatments for hard to treat soft tissue sarcomas, will be run at Mount Sinai Hospital in partnership with Champions Oncology.

Dr. Albiruni Abdul Razak, a leading sarcoma oncologist, will head the Mount Sinai team that will investigate new personalized drug treatments that can target with precision the different variations of soft tissue sarcoma.

Schwartz joked about her first encounter with key members of Mount Sinai's sarcoma team – Razak and Dr. Jay Wunder, surgeon-in-chief. They met at a sarcoma foundation dinner two years ago.

"I was ranting and raving about how Champion's Oncology saved Yaron's life," Schwartz recalled. "You said to me, 'If you can raise $1 million we'll bring this cancer technology to Mount Sinai'... Well we did it!"

Indeed, she and her medical partner, Dr. Sharla Lichtman, raised the money through their friends and family. Lichtman, who served as MC for the evening, announced that she and Schwartz were building on their fundraising success by launching the next Panov program campaign of $1 million to advance Mount Sinai's sarcoma research program.

Panov 2 will provide seed money for various research projects that can be leveraged to attract major federally funded research grants, she explained.

The flagship study will be on the early detection of liposarcoma, cancer of the fatty tissue, which is the type of cancer former Toronto mayor Rob Ford was diagnosed with earlier this year.

The study will be an international collaboration between Dr. Alona Zer of the Davidoff Cancer Center-Rabin Medical Center with the Weizmann Research Institute, the Ontario Cancer Institute and Mount Sinai's sarcoma department headed by Wunder.

Zer, who finished a two-year fellowship at Mount Sinai and the Princess Margaret Hospital this year, said the joint research project will focus on premalignant cells. She said they will study healthy cells and trace their progression to malignancy with the goal of turning off the genetic switch that causes the cells to become cancerous.

Wunder said the Panov 2 research program will include a series of research projects that will increase the curability of soft tissue sarcoma, which is more challenging to treat than osteo or bone sarcomas, the type of cancer that Terry Fox had.

Wunder pointed out that during Fox's lifetime, the survival rate was just five per cent, but today, Mount Sinai's surgical oncology interventions cure 75 per cent of osteosarcoma patients. ■

For more information about the Panov Program go to supportsinai.ca/panov

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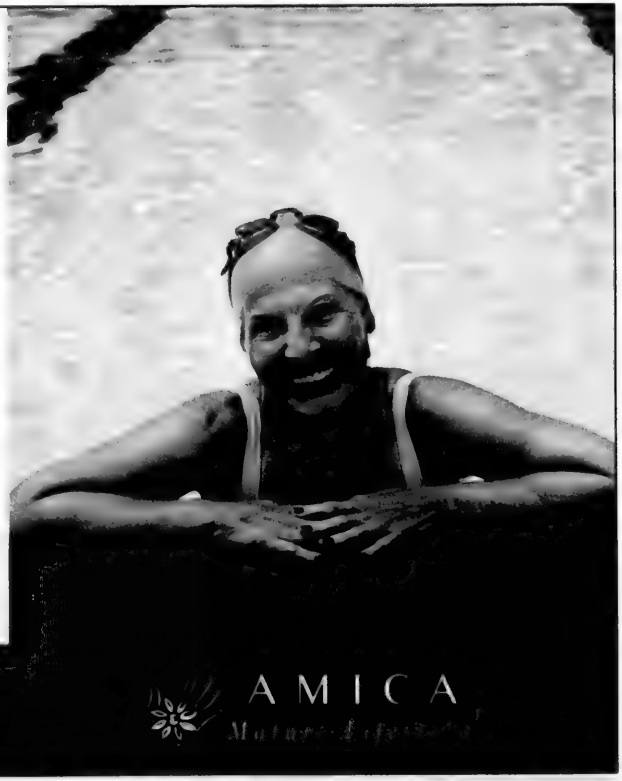

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 19, 2015

CHAT parents to get tuition discount for learning

LILA SARICK
lsarick@thecjn.ca

TanenbaumCHAT has in the past offered classes to adults, taught by faculty and based on the courses offered in the high school.

A pilot project that will give parents a discount on their tuition in exchange for taking Jewish studies classes will be launched at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto next school year.

The program, which will only be open to families who are new to the school, offers a $5,000 discount on tuition for parents who commit to a 24-week course of Jewish studies, taught by TanenbaumCHAT's own faculty.

The initiative, called Scholars' Circle, will be open to parents, regardless of income, but will certainly assist those who find tuition steep, said head of school Rabbi Lee Buckman. Tuition for 2015-16 is $26,500.

Scholars' Circle is also intended to give parents a greater understanding of what actually happens during the school day. Parents generally only spend a few minutes a year meeting their children's teachers.

"If parents have a deep connection with our teachers and the quality of our teaching, they'll be stronger ambassadors of the program," Rabbi Buckman said.

The program will demonstrate the importance parents place on Jewish studies and give parents and children a common background to discuss what is being taught in school.

"My hope is that it will create conversations among parents and kids that will enrich the Jewish experiences of the child," he said.

A version of the program was first initiated by the Kohelet Foundation in Philadelphia, a private foundation that explores how to improve day school education. Rabbi Buckman implemented a variation of it at Atlanta's Greenfield Hebrew Academy, where he was head of school before coming to TanenbaumCHAT two years ago.

In Atlanta, about 60 parents participated, but both the time demands and the tuition subsidy were smaller.

Donors Dov and Nancy Friedberg, who are underwriting the program here, wanted the bar to be higher in terms of the Jewish studies requirement.

"The donor was clear that [instead of] just giving away money, we could leverage that money and get something back that was more valuable and enriching to a child's education," Rabbi Buckman said.

Funding has been provided for 16 families to participate in the 2016 academic year. Parents will be required to participate in 24 weeks of 90-minute-long classes on Jewish history, Tanach (Bible) and Jewish ethics taught by faculty from both the north and south campuses. Twice a year, before Chanukah and Passover, parents and students will study together.

The tuition discount for families who complete the program will be applied the following year.

The Scholars' Circle initiative fits into the school's strategic plan aimed at increasing enrolment, enhancing education, tightening expenses and intensifying fundraising.

After a few years of declining enrolment, the school has shifted to actively recruiting new students, rather than simply managing applications, Rabbi Buckman said.

Enrolment at both campuses is 1,035 students. This year's Grade 9 class was slightly larger than the previous year's, he said.

As well, a group of 35 parent ambassadors has been formed to promote the school. It's anticipated that participants in the Scholars' Circle program will also bolster efforts to promote the school.

TanenbaumCHAT has also stepped up its fundraising efforts. In addition to the funding for the Scholars' Choice program, a $1.5-million donation from Anita and Daniel Chai was recently announced for a new robotics and engineering program. ■

NCJW plans Jewish addiction rehab centre in Winnipeg

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Two events a day apart last month marked a clear break between the past and future for the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Winnipeg section.

On Oct. 15, NCJW Winnipeg revealed its next big project, which president Cindy Lazar unveiled on the occasion of the opening of a new Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada exhibit celebrating NCJW Winnipeg's 90 years of service to the community.

That project is the Winnipeg Jewish Recovery and Resource Centre, potentially Canada's first such service for members of the community who are struggling with addictions. (Lazar noted that other communities are also working on plans for similar centres.)

The centre would be modelled on the Shalom Residences – Jewish homes for developmentally disabled adults, similar to Toronto's Reena homes – Lazar said. The NCJW-supported residence, operated in conjunction with Winnipeg's Jewish Child and Family Service, would provide a home environment with a Jewish atmosphere that would be open to both Jewish and non-Jewish residents with addiction issues.

"We are not sure yet if the home would be for sober living or people struggling with addiction, or both," Lazar said. "It depends on the need."

She said the project is still in the planning stages. "We are putting together a business plan and a fund development plan. It will be a multifaceted campaign."

Meanwhile, on Oct. 14, NCJW Winnipeg section officially cut its last ties with the project that it has been most widely identified with for the past 60 years.

At a press conference at the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre, Lazar and Gwen Secter president Karen Grant jointly announced that a buyer has been found for the building that the Jewish seniors drop-in centre has called home for more than 25 years.

An anonymous donor – rumoured to be a former Winnipegger now living in the United States – has come forward with $900,000 to buy the building, as of the end of October, from the NCJW in order to allow the seniors centre to remain in operation.

NCJW had been involved in supporting seniors since 1949, when the Winnipeg section founded the Golden Age Club, the first seniors' drop-in centre in Canada. For many years, the seniors centre operated out of the NCJW building in the old Jewish neighbourhood in Winnipeg's North End.

Cindy Lazar, left, of NCJW Winnipeg; Jeff Gilbert, centre, president of Jewish Child and Family Service (JCFS); and Al Benarroch, JCFS executive director, promote the new Winnipeg Jewish Recovery and Resource Centre.
MYRON LOVE PHOTO

In 1986, with the Jewish community having largely moved further north (and south), NCJW purchased a former tire store further north and converted it into its new seniors centre, which was renamed after the late Gwen Secter, an NCJW leader for many years. Through various fundraisers and government grants, the building was renovated and officially opened in May 1989.

For the next 20 years, Lazar said, NCJW paid all the operating costs for the seniors centre, primarily with funds generated by its thrift store in the Fort Rouge area of the city. Due to a cutback in funding stemming from the store's closure in 2010, a new lease was arranged, with the Gwen Secter Centre assuming operating expenses and maintenance, but continuing to pay no rent.

"The lease was extended in 2012," Lazar said, "giving the centre four years' notice of NCJW's intent to sell the building at the end of the extended lease. NCJW Winnipeg received temporary funding from the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg for its operations, on the premise that it would be able to sell the building by May 2016 and repay the loan.

"The sale of the building will ensure the future of the centre, which we founded and supported," Lazar said. "It will also enable us to meet our commitments and new challenges in the community."

She also said NCJW's membership in Winnipeg is growing again after years of decline. "We have two new chapters starting up this year," she said. "Younger women are looking for an opportunity to make a difference in the community. NCJW provides that opportunity." ■

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Prof lauded for role in 1979 refugee crisis

Howard Adelman, right, and Nam Nguyen
BARBARA SILVERSTEIN PHOTO

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Members of the local Vietnamese community paid tribute to Prof. Howard Adelman for his leadership in bringing Vietnamese refugees to Canada, and to Holy Blossom Temple for its sponsorship role during the Vietnamese "boat people" crisis back in 1979.

More than 200 people from both communities gathered at Holy Blossom on Remembrance Day to celebrate the successful resettlement of Vietnamese refugees in Canada.

Adelman's initiative led to the arrival of 60,000 refugees in this country. They were among the two million Indochinese people who fled Communist rule after the fall of Saigon in 1975.

Ron Atkey, minister of immigration in 1979, said that just weeks after taking power, the Conservative government of Joe Clark committed to taking in 50,000 refugees through a matching program of public and private sponsorship. "It was so successful, the private sponsorships outnumbered the government [ones], and so we raised the quota to 60,000."

That success can be traced to Operation Lifeline, a national campaign launched in the summer of 1979 by Adelman, then a York University philosophy professor. Operation Lifeline, which promoted the private sponsorship of Vietnamese families, helped resettle 30,000 refugees.

At the Holy Blossom event, the local Vietnamese community announced the establishment of a humanitarian award, the Thoi Bao Community Howard Adelman Award, in Adelman's honour.

Adelman said that on a night of remembrance, it was important to acknowledge the refugees who died during the crisis. "At least 200,000 Vietnamese drowned at sea. That should not be forgotten."

He was also quick to credit the efforts of other people who propelled the campaign forward. "I was one element of a big collective effort."

He noted that under Rabbi Arthur Bielfeld, Temple Emanu-El sponsored 100 refugees. Adelman also praised Atkey and his department for their support. "The leadership of the government made such a big difference."

He said the two civil servants that Atkey sent to the first meeting of Operation Lifeline discreetly steered the group towards private sponsorship.

Sen. Ngo Thanh Hai, who was also a Vietnamese refugee, lauded the compassion of Canadians and stressed the need to help Syrian refugees.

In fact, Le Luong of VOICE (Vietnamese Overseas Initiative for Conscience Empowerment) said the Canadian group will be sponsoring four families. "We are paying it forward. We will carry your torch."

Steven Garmaise, chair of JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Service) Toronto, said the agency is working closely with Operation Lifeline Syria. So far, 25 groups from the Jewish community are sponsoring 11 families.

Members from both communities shared their memories and their connection to Operation Lifeline in 1979. Dr. Khoi Nguyen recalled fleeing Vietnam on a boat struck by typhoons and pirates.

A highlight of the evening was hearing from Nam Nguyen, 17, the 2015 Canadian national male figure skating champion and son of a Vietnamese refugee. He said his father was an inspiration to him, and if he wins gold at the 2018 Olympics, he will dedicate his medal to the Jewish community.

Helen Poizner said: "Sponsoring the refugees was the best thing Temple Emanu-El ever did."

David Hertzman was among 13 groups from Holy Blossom who sponsored 66 individuals. "Nobody felt heroic," he said. "We were happy to help."

Fred Zemans, a past president of the temple, accepted the award for Holy Blossom, presented by Kyanh Do, president of VOICE, Canada. "It was an incredible opportunity to deal with social justice," Zemans said. "It is something built into our religion."

His words echoed those of Rabbi Yael Splansky, senior rabbi of Holy Blossom. Looking out for the stranger and treating the stranger well is the commandment most repeated in the Torah, she said. "It is our sacred duty to do so joyfully. It is a sacred commandment done wholeheartedly." ■

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Correction

In the photo caption accompanying the Nov. 12 story, "Film documents stories of Shoah child survivors," the people in the picture, reproduced right, were incorrectly identified. They are, front row, from left, Faigie Libman and Susan Pasternak, and, back row, Anna Cheszes, left, and Yolanda Engel. In addition, in the story itself, the names of Fili Cassares and Nina Koval were misspelled. *The CJN* regrets these errors. ■

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Three-step plan for facing down Islamist terrorism

DAVID HOROVITZ
JERUSALEM

Holding mass solidarity marches, and vowing, stern-faced, to fight back against the Islamic State just isn't going to do it. Islamic extremist terror groups, and the states that sponsor them, are seeking to destroy open, democratic, egalitarian Western society and impose their bleak, bloody, perverted version of Islam.

Facing them down will obviously not be simple. But it will be impossible unless the reality of the threat is genuinely internalized and the fight back mounted in earnest.

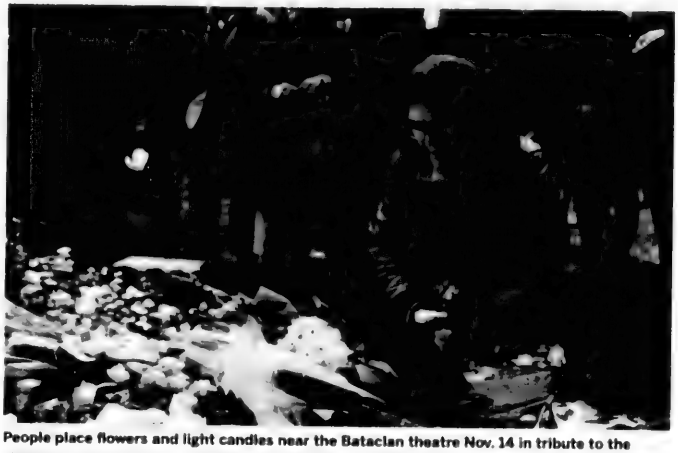
If the West continues to delude itself about the scale of the challenge, those who delight in the divine gift of life will find themselves becoming increasingly constrained and terrified by those who assert an imperative to kill and be killed in the name of God.

The struggle to maintain fundamental Western freedoms involves a three-step process.

1. Name and acknowledge the enemy. The killers who struck in Paris – like those who brought down a Russian civilian airliner in the Sinai, and who carried out suicide bombings in Beirut last week, and who struck at *Charlie Hebdo* and the Hyper Cacher in Paris in January, and in London on July 7, 2005, and on Sept. 11, 2001, in New York, and who blew up the AMIA Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires in 1994, and, yes, who killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings in the second intifadah, and on and on and on through an endless list of outrages worldwide – are not vague "militants." They are Islamic extremists, adherents of that toxic kill-and-be-killed Islamist ideology.

And their actions are not mere "violence" but terrorism – killing in order to terrorize, in order to weaken and cow their opposition, the better to impose that rapacious ideology.

2. Defend more effectively against Islamist terror. Global leaders keep talking a good fight, but they're not actually fighting a good fight. This means relentless, concerted action to make the killing of innocents more difficult for the Islamist terrorists. Better security at places where people gather in large numbers – Israel-style. (Suicide bombers should not be able to walk into concert halls.) The allocation of more resources to intelligence hierarchies, and constant co-operation between international agencies, to identify potential killers and to spot terror plans in the making. Effective surveillance. Preventive arrests. With most every recent murderous attack in Europe, it turns out afterward that this or that killer was on an intelligence "watch list." Evidently not watched carefully enough.



People place flowers and light candles near the Bataclan theatre Nov. 14 in tribute to the victims of the Paris terror attacks. LAURENCE GEAI/FLASH90 PHOTO

At a deeper, strategic level, it means a far more resolute fight against the terror groups and their state sponsors in their home headquarters, and effective support for those people in our part of the world who seek to rise up against extremist oppressors and rulers. Take Syria, Iran and Egypt, for example.

Trying to keep the Middle East at arm's length, Europe now has the region's most extreme elements opening fire in its museums and magazine offices, at its restaurants and in its concert halls.

At the start of the uprising against Bashar Assad in Syria, there was a secular, relatively moderate opposition. But the West did little to help it, and in time, it was marginalized by murderous Islamic extremist groups, and Syria became a battleground in which there was no "good" side for the West to assist.

Rather than facing down the world's chief sponsor of terrorism, Iran, the world powers this summer legitimized the ayatollahs' nuclear program, and paved the way for a massive influx of funds that Tehran is already using to stir up more unrest in the Middle East and more terrorism worldwide. In 2009, when the people of Iran sought to oust the mullahs, the West chose not to lift a finger to help them. Right now, in Egypt, President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi is publicly urging the advance of moderate Islam, warning that his religion is now perceived globally as a faith predominantly interested in killing. Sissi came to power violently, ousting a democratically elected president. But the Muslim Brotherhood would never have held another democratic election, and Sissi is trying to prevent his country's descent into Islamic extremism. Rather than seeking to create conditions in which it could help heal the Egyptian economy, and enable Egypt to feed and employ its 80 million people, much of the West – emphatically including the United States – seems content to stay away. The West's desire to avoid being dragged into new wars in our part of the world is understandable. Israel – despicably battered and demonized internationally as it battles Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah and other purveyors of Islamic extremist terror – deeply shares the desire to avert further conflicts. But Islamic extremist leaders are not going to be talked into compromise. They must be faced down.

And only if they are faced down is there a hope that new generations will grow up in a functional climate, with some prospect of decent education, opportunity and a life worth living, making them less vulnerable to the Islamist recruiters.

3. Prevent the recruitment of new waves of Islamist terrorists. Islamist killers are not born Islamist killers. They are (mis)educated. Indoctrinated. Filled with hatred and false prophecy. They are skewed by parents and teachers, politicians and spiritual leaders, books and websites, conventional media and social media.

The long process of reversing the rising tide of hatred requires international co-operation toward grassroots change. Fund moderate educational hierarchies and websites and media outlets, and close those that peddle extremism. Help moderate spiritual leaders gain greater resonance and prominence (and replicate this small example a few thousand times) and prosecute those who preach murder.

Extremists are brainwashing too many of the children of Islam, wooing them to a death cult. Those who value life need to get to them first.

The toxic Islamist ideology that encourages followers to kill and be killed in the name of Allah spews from innumerable websites and social media outlets with ever-increasing sophistication. There is self-evidently no shortage of hate-filled adherents, some of them returning to the West from the battlefields of the Middle East, ready to act on the perverted Islamist ideology. And therefore, amid all the now familiar vows from Western leaders to strike back effectively against Islamist terrorism, the dismal truth is that the West is going to be hit again and again and again with acts of unspeakable evil such as befell Paris on Friday unless it adopts a far more serious, strategic approach to tackling Islamist terror.

On Charonne Street in Paris, moments after Islamist gunmen had opened fire, eyewitness Sebastian Jagreau told the *Associated Press* he saw a woman slumped at a table. "I thought she had a bump, but then we realized it was a bullet in her head, and not a bump. She was stretched on the table with her beer next to her," he said. "Then I see a guy crying because his wife was dead."

If we want to avoid a world plunged ever-deeper into the darkness of Islamist terrorism, now would be a good time to begin the strategic counterattack. ■

Times Of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

OPINION

Liberals, Israel and the lessons of history

Gerald Steinberg

Israel and the chaos of the Middle East are unlikely to be high on the agenda of the Liberal government, which is good, since this is a region where they should tread slowly and carefully. Although Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his team will be pressed to take positions, make pronouncements and allocate taxpayer money under the labels peace, human rights and humanitarian aid, there are important lessons from the failures of 10 years ago that should be considered first.

In contrast to former prime minister Stephen Harper's very independent stance, the Liberal "old guard" clings to an intense faith in discredited international institutions such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Court. This is also the legacy of former Liberal prime minister Lester Pearson and the model (or myth, according to critics) of Canada as a "third power" and "honest broker" on issues of war and peace. Such misplaced faith is reinforced by European policies, although their initiatives, particularly regarding Israel, have never proven wise or successful.

Indeed, within days of the Liberal victory, advocates of this failed approach began to lobby Trudeau and his new foreign minister, Stéphane Dion – who brings gravitas and experience to this position. On Israel, Dion is indeed a friend – I had a number of discussions with him in Jerusalem about 15 years ago. But he and others in cabinet and Foreign Affairs will be pressed by less friendly voices, pitching grand plans based on good intentions that are easily manipulated.

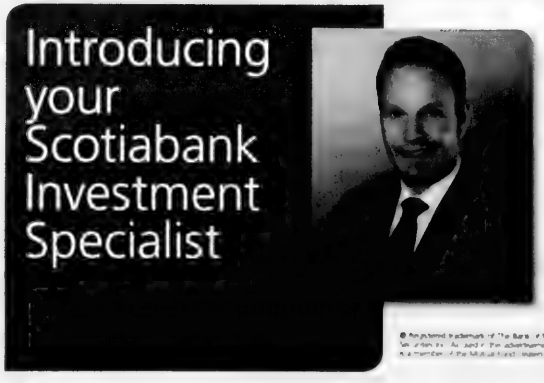
The disastrous 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, remains a case in point. The Liberal government at the time was a major sponsor of this ostensibly moral initiative, but the reality was an anti-Israel hate-fest that led the United States and Israeli diplomatic delegations to walk out in protest.

It was at the Durban NGO Forum that groups claiming to promote human rights launched their boycott and demonization campaigns against Israel. And under the Liberals of the 1990s, millions of dollars in Canadian aid funds were given to radical non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that promoted the Durban warfare strategy without due diligence or adult supervision. Harper put an immediate end to this.

A significant portion of the misspent money was channelled through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which then funded NGOs, with little or no supervision. Of CIDA's $2-billion annual budget, one-quarter went to the Middle East, including many grants to radical and anti-Israel NGOs that promoted boycotts. Recipients included Montreal-based Alternatives, BADIL (which exploits the refugee issue for political warfare), Kairos, Medical Aid for Palestinians, Médecins du Monde, the Mennonite Central Committee, and World Vision. The activities of these groups fuelled the conflict, and in 2006, CIDA's budget and activities came under closer supervision, with changes in leadership and funding. (In 2013, CIDA became part of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development.)

The Liberal government of the 1990s also funded the Rights and Democracy framework, whose activities were often highly secretive and inconsistent with Canadian values, to understate the case. In 2009, it provided grants to the Palestinian NGOs Al Haq and Al Mezan – two leaders of the NGO Durban agenda. Israeli court documents allege that Shawan Jabarin, who heads Al Haq, was involved with a terror group. These groups routinely accuse Israel of "genocide," "crimes against humanity," "apartheid," "ethnic cleansing," "massacres," and "slaughtering civilians." When these activities were exposed, Rights and Democracy was shut down.

Officials who ran these anti-democratic organizations and benefited from the government's generosity have waited for 10 years to regain the money and influence they had under the previous Liberal government. The question is whether the lessons have been learned, or whether these mistakes and the resulting damage will be repeated. ■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World should also condemn terrorism in Israel, Bibi says

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
JERUSALEM

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu drew parallels last Sunday between the massive terror rampage that rocked Paris Nov. 13 and attacks against Israelis, saying the world that had rallied to condemn bloodshed in France must do so for Israel as well.

"It is time for states to condemn terrorism against us like they condemn terrorism anywhere else in the world. It is appropriate that [Palestinian Authority President] Mahmoud Abbas, who condemned the attack in France yesterday, will condemn the cruel terrorism against innocents in Israel and fight the incitement fueling it," Netanyahu told his cabinet meeting.

Referring to a shooting attack the same day as the Paris bombings that left a rabbi and son dead in the West Bank, Netanyahu said the perpetrators had been the same.

"Hours after the murder in Otniel, terrorists went on a ruthless terror attack in Paris and murdered innocents," he said. "In Israel, as in France, terrorism is terrorism, and the force standing behind it is radical Islam and its wish to destroy its victims."

At least 129 people died in the attack in Paris and more than 300 were wounded in a large, co-ordinated shooting and bombing attack claimed by the Islamic State (ISIS), the worst violence to hit the country since World War II.

Approximately 2,500 Israelis gathered in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square on Nov. 14 to express solidarity with the people of France. RONI SHUTZER/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

There was no claim of responsibility for the Otniel shooting, which came amid a wave of stabbings and other attacks that have left 15 Israelis dead in two months.

Netanyahu has compared Palestinian terrorists to ISIS in the past, with critics responding that he was oversimplifying a complicated threat.

Netanyahu also rejected claims that terror against Israel was linked to policies in the West Bank.

"We are not at fault for the terrorism turned toward us just as the French are not at fault for the terrorism turned toward them. Those to blame for terrorism are terrorists. Not the territories, not the settlements nor any other factor – it is the will to destroy us that keeps the conflict alive and motivates murderous aggression against us," he said.

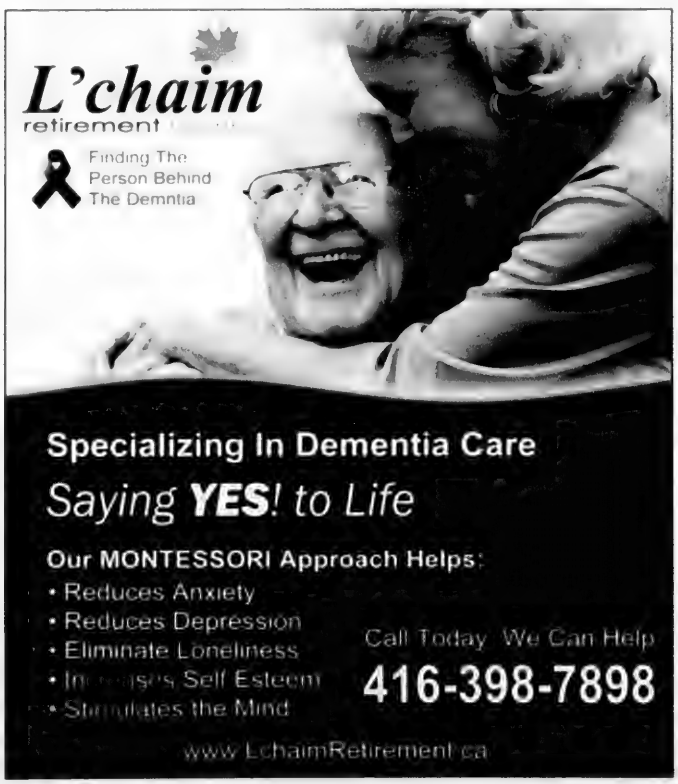
He said Israel's "resolute policy," including "controlling territory, entering villages, demolishing terrorists' homes, disrupting terror networks," were the reasons Israel "many times succeeds in intercepting and preventing more severe disasters."

Other Israelis have also drawn parallels between the terrorism in France and Israel.

"The whole world now understands what we experience in Israel and Jerusalem – murderous terrorism motivated by the same hatred and a mission of death against innocents in the West," Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat said Nov. 14 after attending the funeral for West Bank victims Yaakov and Netanel Litman.

Jewish Home leader and Education Minister Naftali Bennett seemed to say that Europe had received its comeuppance for taking anti-Israel stances.

"I said that if they wouldn't stand with us it will eventually reach them – and now this happened," Bennett told Army Radio. ■



How can Israel help in the fight against ISIS?

ROBERT SWIFT
JERUSALEM

Following massed, co-ordinated attacks against civilians in the heart of Paris, governments around the world are reflecting on what can be done to protect their citizens and to tackle an ascendant Islamic State (ISIS). The ultra-extremist Sunni Muslim group which controls territory in Syria and Iraq claimed responsibility for the attacks which killed at least 129 people and injured hundreds more.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Reuven Rivlin both expressed their condolences and sympathy with the people of France.

"Israel stands shoulder-to-shoulder with France in this common battle against militant Islamic terrorism," Netanyahu said. "I've instructed Israel's security and intelligence forces to assist their French counterparts and their counterparts from other European countries in any way possible."

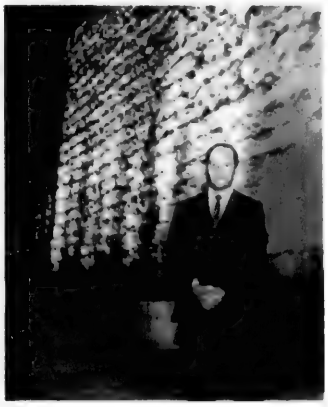
In its campaign against ISIS, American planes generally fly from Germany, as they have not been given sufficient access to use Turkish air bases. If Israeli airbases were to be used to launch U.S. raids, greater force could be brought to bear on ISIS. This would be increased even more if the Israeli Air Force was to join the sorties.

Yet analysts say, that is highly unlikely to happen due to the convoluted politics of the powers in the region. Instead, Israel will offer its Western allies intelligence, as well as its considerable experience in protecting civilian locations from terrorist threat.

The Jewish state will not join the coalition against ISIS due to the sensitivities of Gulf Arab states who are members of the coalition, Meir Elran, a senior research fellow and head of the program on homeland security at the Institute for National Security Studies, told *The Media Line*. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), have all taken part in attacks against ISIS, and all are countries which are uncomfortable with any visible alliance with Israel.

"There is a resentment on their part to Israeli participation. Israel could have done a lot more if that kind of limitation would be taken off the table," Elran suggested.

Israel could still conduct strikes if it were to do so without advertising the fact, Moshe Ma'oz, a professor of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, told *The Media Line*. "Israel could be part of it. Maybe not (overtly) sticking out because it could be a weapon in the hands of ISIS who would say 'you are fighting alongside the Zionists,'" Ma'oz suggested.



Jerusalem's Mayor Nir Barkat stands in front of the Old City walls which were lit up in the French colours on Nov. 14.
PERY MANDELBAUM/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

For the time being ISIS does not appear to demonstrate a serious threat to Israel. "(ISIS) doesn't have access to the state of Israel, not from the Golan Heights and not from Lebanon. The only place they do have access is the Sinai Peninsula," Nitzan Nuriel, a research associate at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Inter Disciplinary Center in Herzliya said. The southern city of Eilat, located near the border with Egypt was a particularly tempting target for ISIS affiliates in the Sinai Peninsula, Nuriel added.

The Egyptian military is struggling to contain an insurgency in the Sinai. Although the Islamic State affiliate there has not recently targeted Israel, they are considered a credible threat due to the damage they have inflicted on the Egyptian military, and the likelihood that the group planted a bomb on a Russian airliner last month, killing all 224 people on board.

At least right now, Israel appears to be a low priority target for the Islamic State, although this assessment could change. Western intelligence analysts suggested that the recent attacks on the Russian airline and in Paris show that the group may have pivoted towards conducting attacks outside of its own territory. ■

The Media Line
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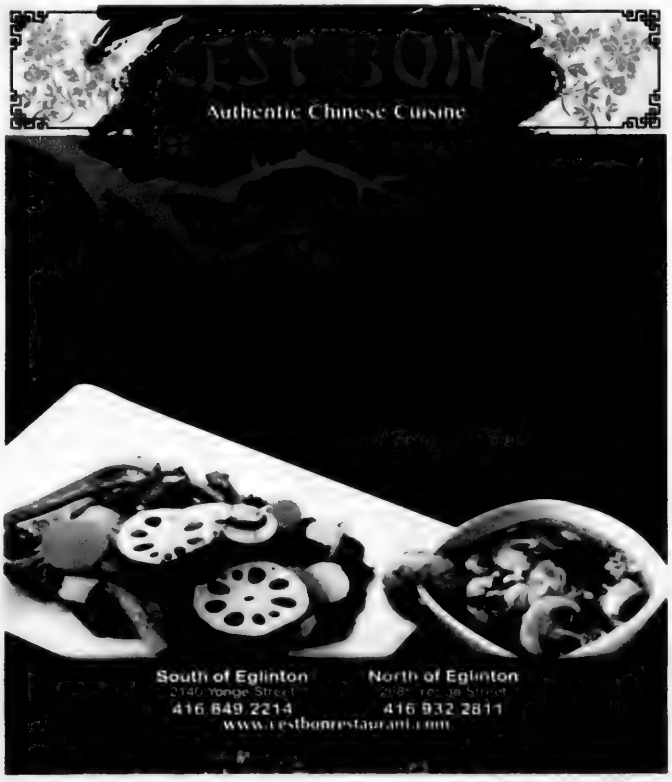

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Israeli officials outspoken against EU labelling rules

JTA
JERUSALEM

Israel's Foreign Ministry suspended dialogue with the European Union to protest the EU's decision to label products from West Bank settlements separately from goods made within Israel's pre-1967 borders.

The ministry froze the dialogue on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on Nov. 11, saying in a statement that it was pulling out of several EU forums.

"We have suspended the subcommittee on diplomacy, the subcommittee on human rights and international organizations," the statement said. "The remaining dialogues [with the EU] are continuing as planned. Clearly, we won't damage Israeli interests."

EU Ambassador Lars Faaborg-Andersen said the new guidelines concerning separate labelling were "a small technical addition to something that has existed for a very long time: the trade facilitation between products coming from Israel proper, within its 1967 lines, and products coming from beyond the Green Line."

He added that "this is not a boycott."

The separate labelling will be applied not just to products from Jewish settlements in the West Bank, but also to goods produced in eastern Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. They will also indicate whether they originate from Palestinian or Israeli producers.

Israeli officials have been outspoken in their opposition to the new labelling, which was adopted Nov. 11 by the European Commission in Brussels.

The move is "hypocritical and applies double standards, targeting Israel when there are over 200 other conflicts around the world," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement.

"The Israeli economy is strong and will withstand this; those who will be hurt will be those Palestinians who work in Israeli factories. The EU should be ashamed."

Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely said the guidelines were discriminatory and designed to promote a boycott.

Some leftist politicians in Israel, notably opposition leader Isaac Herzog, joined right-wingers in denouncing the plan.

The head of the European Parliament's main body for promoting relations with Israel also announced his opposition to new guidelines on labelling products from the West Bank.

The chair of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with Israel, said he sides with Israel regarding its criticism of the European Commission's issuing of guidelines requiring such labelling.

"We Europeans have not been the best partner and we are pushing back this partnership," Fulvio Martusciello said in a speech in Brussels before members of the American Jewish Committee. The guidelines, he added, were designed to "stop products from beyond the 1967 Green Line" and to exert political pressure on Israel to push forward peace talks with Palestinians.

European Jewish Congress president Moshe Kantor called the guidelines problematic and a "double standard," pointing out in a statement issued Nov. 11 that there are "no comparable guidelines for any other territorial dispute or what are perceived as occupations anywhere else in the world.

"We see that once again Israel is singled out for special treatment above all other nations of the world and this is clearly discriminatory and stands in stark contradistinction to the EU's own mandate to be fair and free of prejudice," Kantor said.

Human Rights Watch issued a statement in support of the labelling settlement products. "The EU's new guidelines on accurately labelling settlement products are in line with states' duty to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law, under which settlements are illegal."

Gerald Steinberg of NGO Monitor called the guidelines "another act in the ongoing NGO campaign to delegitimize Israel.

"This strategy is also the driving force of BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) campaigns, and it is led by EU-funded NGOs that are detrimental to a peaceful, negotiated solution," Steinberg said in a statement.

"For years, the EU has given money earmarked for humanitarian aid and peace-building to political groups that abuse human rights to promote their own agendas. These organizations have lobbied hard for the EU to adopt their ideas, with the rhetoric of 'consumer choice' masking what is clearly an anti-Israel measure," according to the statement. "NGO Monitor research shows that NGOs push labelling as a first step in the BDS process, aimed at all Israeli products and services." ■

'I REALLY MISS BEING ABLE TO SEE THE SKY, ANY SHADE OF THE SKY.'

On November 10, 2012, **Yehuda Persi, a Givati Brigade fighter was blinded and severely wounded when an anti-tank missile hit the jeep he was driving** near the Gaza border. He was only 23 years old.

"The missile blew up and shrapnel flew into my face. All four of us in the jeep were badly injured."

Over three months, Yehuda underwent numerous complicated surgeries on his head and eyes.

"I had to move back home with my parents and learn to adjust to being blind. Daily tasks became a hardship, but I learned to cope. I can now take a shower on my own, prepare basic meals, and dress myself. The bigger problem is everything outside my house and comfort zone."

"I smile and try to have a positive outlook on life. Until I am given the absolute, final verdict on my vision, I still hope to see again, even if just a little, just a bit. I really miss being able to see the sky, any shade of the sky."

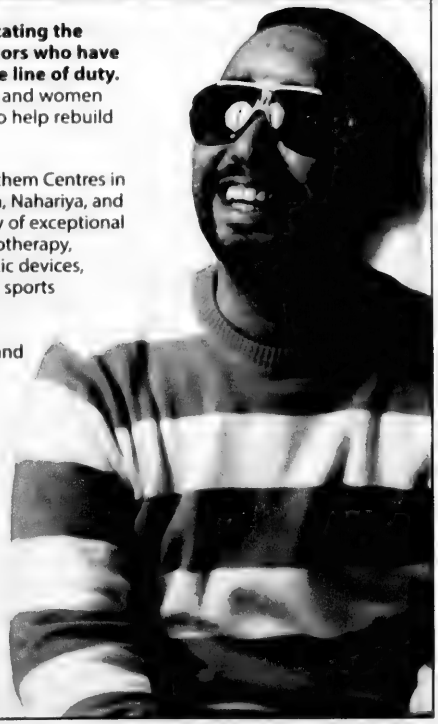
Thanks to Beit Halochem, Yehuda has moved forward, regaining a future filled with promise and possibility. Yehuda spends most of his days at Beit Halochem in Tel Aviv, where he receives physiotherapy and participates in sports and social programs. He works out at the fitness facility and enjoys swimming and running.

Beit Halochem Canada, Aid to Disabled Veterans of Israel, is committed to rehabilitating the 51,000 wounded warriors who have become disabled in the line of duty. Like Yehuda, these men and women rely on Beit Halochem to help rebuild their lives.

Leading-edge Beit Halochem Centres in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Nahariya, and Beer Sheva offer an array of exceptional services including physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, therapeutic devices, scholarships, specialized sports equipment and training, family-oriented programming, creative and cultural activities.

While we long for peace, the battle to defend and secure Israel never ends. Regrettably, the number of Beit Halochem members continues to grow.

Our obligation is to assist those who have paid a painful price defending Israel and her citizens.



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Netanyahu remarks signal shift, Israeli Reform head says

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca.

From left, Linda Kislowicz, president and CEO of Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA; Rabbi Gilad Kariv; Rabbi Nir Barkin; ARZA Canada president Miriam Pearlman; and Les Rothschild, chair of Canadian Friends of World Union of Progressive Judaism. PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

You could say that Rabbi Gilad Kariv, executive director of the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism, is leading an insurrection, a popular revolt aimed at upending the status quo that has guided Israel's policy on religious matters since the state was born in 1948.

The Orthodox establishment has had a stranglehold on officially sanctioned religious practices in the country for too long, Rabbi Kariv believes. It has zealously guarded its privileged position, but it's time for it to make space for other branches of Judaism that are legitimate and representative of the vast majority of Israeli citizens. In that regard, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent remarks in Washington, D.C., herald progress, he told *The CJN* in Toronto last week.

Rabbi Kariv was in town to visit representatives of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and ARZA Canada and brief them and local congregations about developments in Israel. His colleague, Rabbi Nir Barkin, also visited Reform congregations in Vancouver and Calgary and was planning other trips to synagogues in Mississauga, Hamilton and Oakville as part of their trip to North America.

Earlier, Rabbi Kariv attended the Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly (GA) in Washington.

Netanyahu recently recognized Reform and Conservative Judaism "as native Israeli phenomena," Rabbi Kariv noted. And in his address to the GA, Netanyahu said, "As prime minister of Israel I will ensure that all Jews – Reform, Conservative and Orthodox – feel at home in Israel."

That signals a profound strategic shift in government thinking, the rabbi believes.

"When the prime minister says he is committed to… strengthening the presence of Reform and Conservative in Israel, that for us is one of the best proofs that our movement is making inroads into the mainstream of Israeli society," he said.

That can have practical implications. "Before Netanyahu's statement, his senior team in the Prime Minister's Office and leaders of the Jewish Agency started a serious negotiation with leaders of Israel's Conservative and Reform movements about practical ways to support the work of our movement with government funds. I hope that within months, the government will match Jewish Agency allocations to [Reform and Conservative] congregations," he said.

That could mean an extra $1 million a year from the government, doubling the annual Jewish Agency allocation, but still amounting to only a fraction of the 2 billion shekels ($685 million) the Orthodox receive from the government.

Rabbi Kariv believes Canadian Jews have a role to play in all of this.

Netanyahu will come under pressure from the Orthodox establishment to walk away from his statement. "We expect Diaspora leaders and our Israeli members and supporters to create a counter-pressure," he said. "It is important that the leaders of the Jewish federations in North America, rabbis and lay leaders of congregations will understand that without keeping the pressure and keeping the prime minister fully accountable for his previous statements, the ultra-Orthodox parties will succeed in preventing this important breakthrough from happening."

Rabbi Kariv stressed that the alternatives to Orthodoxy are growing by leaps and bounds in Israel. The number of Jews who identify as Reform or Conservative has at least doubled in the last 10 years, jumping from four per cent to somewhere between eight and 12 per cent. Whereas earlier generations of Israelis were focused on reviving the Hebrew language and promoting Israeli culture, third- and fourth-generation Israelis are seeking a spiritual attachment to Judaism that is not Orthodox.

"The growth is a result of a growing number of Israeli individual and families, mostly secular, who are interested in strengthening their Jewish identity in a progressive, egalitarian and inclusive way," he said.

Rabbi Kariv believes that as more and more Israelis look to Reform and Conservative alternatives to express their spirituality, they face a significant disadvantage. Their conversions, marriages and divorces are not recognized by the government. Only Orthodox ones are.

As a democratic state, Israel should level the playing field and treat all religious streams equally. It should recognize the conversions, marriages and divorces of all and not permit the Orthodox to have a veto on which practices are recognized by government, he said.

It is crucial "to create a critical mass of Jews in Israel and the Diaspora who say, enough is enough."

There must be a level playing field in which all streams of Judaism can compete for followers in the marketplace of ideas, he added.

"I want to end the Orthodox monopoly," he said. "I don't want to break the Orthodox rabbinate. I want Israeli law not to grant the Orthodox a monopoly on Jewish life." ■

Le Bataclan received threats over pro-Israel events

CNAAN LIPSHIZ
JTA PARIS

Before last Friday's bloodbath at Paris's Le Bataclan concert venue, this centrally located hall from the 19th century had received numerous threats over pro-Israel events hosted there.

From at least 2006-2009, Le Bataclan was the venue for the annual fundraising gala of Migdal, the French Jewish nonprofit group that supports the Israeli Border Police. Last month, the theatre served as the meeting place for a gathering of some 500 Zionist Christians who came there in support of the Jewish state

In one case involving threats against Le Bataclan – which until September was owned by a French Jew, Joel Laloux – approximately 10 men wearing Arab keffiyehs over their faces showed up at the theatre in December demanding to speak to management.

"You will pay the consequences of your actions," one of the men from the group was filmed telling the security guards outside Le Bataclan, his voice electronically distorted. "We came here to pass along a small message. Be warned. Next time we won't be coming here to talk."

The massacre at Le Bataclan Nov. 13 during a rock concert was by far the deadliest of the six simultaneous attacks which French security forces said were perpetrated by at least eight terrorists.

Two terrorists fired at patrons at random but in a calm and deliberate manner, survivors said. Police stormed the building approximately 40 minutes after the killing began. The terrorists were killed in the takeover.

According to the website of Le Bataclan, the venue was run until its sale in September by Jules Frutos and Olivier Poubelle for Joel Laloux, whose father, Elie Touitou, bought the venue in 1976. He owned most or all of the theatre until September, when the media group of the billionaire Arnaud Lagardère bought a 70 per cent stake. Laloux immigrated to Israel recently.

For France's far-right Jewish Defense League, the threats against Le Bataclan are proof that it was targeted as punishment for hosting pro-Israel events. "Pro-Palestinian groups designated it openly as a 'Zionist' concert hall, and now we see the result," the organization wrote in a statement shortly after the attacks. "France woke up to a taste of 'Palestine.'"

Yet Nicolas Shashani, a prominent French pro-Palestinian activist, said that despite the previous threats, Le Bataclan is not generally associated with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. ■

'This situation is unnerving, but not just for us'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Meir noted he was thinking of buying a pistol, but said his wife had vetoed that option. Instead, he had bought a canister of pepper spray, which he now carries in his pocket when working out with clients in this area. I ventured my concern that ordinary citizens walking around with weapons and other means of self-defence would lead to unnecessary errors and to accidents that would outweigh the benefits of those means.

Driving home from that workout, news bulletins announced a serious terrorist attack in Armon Hanatziv. Two terrorists had boarded a bus, one with a revolver, the other with a knife. By the time police overcame them, they had killed two people and injured nine others.

Soon afterward, I was informed by my shul that the person most severely injured in that attack was Richard Lakin, 76, who had been shot in the head and viciously stabbed in many parts of his body. A longtime member of our synagogue, Richard was the ex-husband and soulmate of one of our oldest regular members, as well as grandfather of several grandchildren, including Shachar, a counsellor in our youth movement. Richard's daughter had served under my command in the military.

After he was hospitalized at Hadassah Ein Karem's ICU, I learned more about Richard than I'd ever known. A devoted lifelong educator and community activist, he had given up a position as principal of a school in Connecticut when he immigrated to Israel with his wife and two children 32 years ago. Since then, he and his wife had taught English to generations of students – Jews and Arabs, Christians and Muslims. Next to Richard's picture on his Facebook page is a photo of two young men, arm in arm, one wearing a keffiyah, the other a kippah, with the word "coexist" above the two of them.

My 15-year-old son, Natan, is also a counsellor in our shul's youth movement. When the kids met later that day for their weekly program, they weren't sure how to handle the news. Should they continue with planned activities, or not? They chose the former. Perhaps it was their attempt to carry on with life normally.

But life doesn't go back to normal so quickly. We've always given Natan lifts to school, and for years he's been getting home using public transportation. After the attack in Armon Hanatziv, we decided to find other ways to get Natan home.

Our 20-year-old daughter is currently serving in the IDF. Since the stabbings began, she has also voiced concern. When in civvies at home, she has no problem going out with her friends to cafés, bars and restaurants, places I'm not overly thrilled about during these times. But in her uniform on the way to or from her base, she feels exposed.

The scene at a light rail stop in the Pisgat Ze'ev area of Jerusalem after two Palestinian teens stabbed a security guard on Nov. 10. ISRAEL SUN

• • •

This situation is unnerving, but not just for us. I recently participated in the World Zionist Congress as part of a large delegation of Reform Zionist Jews from around the world. During the congress, our delegates were offered a field trip that included a visit to the Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein Girls' Secondary School in east Jerusalem. It was quite eye-opening, even for me. Most of the mainly Muslim 16- and 17-year-old girls had never met Jews who told them they were interested in finding a peaceful solution to the conflict.

We broke up into small groups, going to different classes. I teamed up with a female rabbi from San Francisco, and, helped by a teacher who translated what we said into Arabic, we read the girls part of Martin Luther King's famous "I Have A Dream" speech and asked them what their own dreams were.

Many spoke of an independent Palestine in which they would have full rights and would not feel oppressed by Israel. One girl described her daily frustrations getting to school – she lives in a neighbourhood not far away, but is almost always late because it takes her hours to get through several roadblocks. Some of the girls described their dream of travelling the world. I was particularly moved by one 17-year-old who told us her dream was to become an astronaut, but that she doesn't believe that dream is attainable, because Israeli authorities won't let her.

Many of the girls, and later the school's principal, mentioned a particularly traumatic experience. A week or so earlier, toward the end of a school day, shots were heard from not far away. It later became clear that one of the girls' schoolmates had been shot as she crossed a main street less than a block away. She had been taken to hospital, and since the incident, neither the girls nor the school's administration had received any official report. The girl's parents had not been allowed to visit her.

> *I cannot and will not agree with those among us who claim it is our destiny to forever live by the sword.*

That story bothered me. I can't be certain it's connected to the same incident, but on Oct. 30, a 16-year-old Palestinian girl from east Jerusalem's Beit Hanina neighbourhood was indicted for an attempted stabbing attack that occurred two weeks earlier on Ammunition Hill, which is adjacent to the secondary school we had visited.

• • •

The last week of October was particularly sobering for me.

Saturday evening, a friend called to tell me Rabbi Chaim (Howie) Rothman, my classmate at Bialik Hebrew Day School and the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, had succumbed to the terrible wounds he sustained almost a year ago when two east Jerusalem terrorists broke into a synagogue in Har Nof, an ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood here in Jerusalem, and viciously attacked several men who had gathered for early-morning prayers.

Four worshippers died at the scene, and a Druze police officer who happened to be nearby, died a short while later from wounds he sustained when he tried to help those inside the synagogue. Seven other worshippers were injured in the attack, Howie most severely. He never regained consciousness.

On Tuesday of that week, I was driving home from my weekly workout with Meir as another news bulletin announced that Richard Lakin had succumbed to his wounds.

As details were made public about Richard, including his advocacy for peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews, something absolutely vile occurred. Online, hateful people took to media comment threads. A loosely translated smidgen of examples from the Hebrew original: "I don't feel even an iota of sadness. Leftists are like terrorists for me"; "He should be buried in Gaza and his tombstone should be defecated upon"; "May his death be a blessing!!!"

How sad. Forget the Palestinians. Where does this leave us? How do we live with each other? Is this the Jewish state we prayed for and dreamed of for 2,000 years?

At Richard's funeral, Shachar, his oldest granddaughter, spoke heartbreakingly to her tallit-covered grandpa. "I know you would want me to always try to be a better person and do the right thing. You would want me to spread love and happiness everywhere I go.

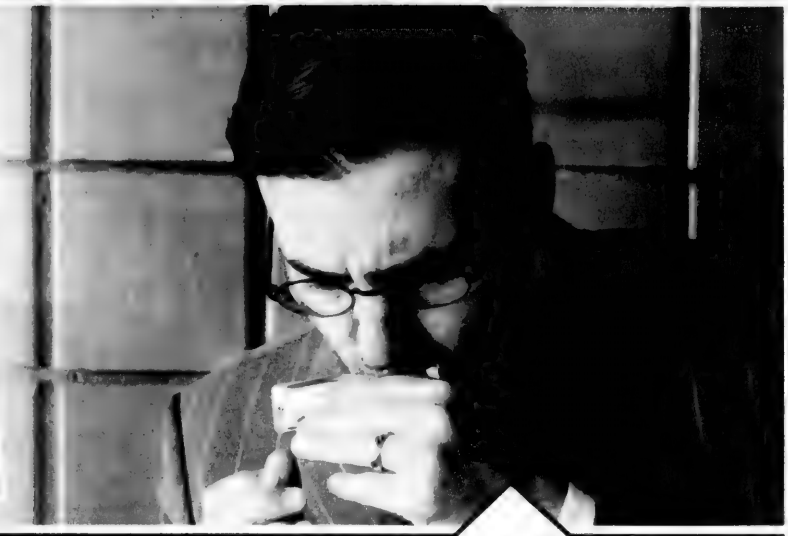
"I think you wouldn't want me to have not even one ounce of hate in my body, even though what has been done to you."

There was not a dry eye in the house.

I cannot and will not agree with those among us who claim it is our destiny to forever live by the sword. I am not naïve, but for the sake of our children and of our grandchildren – and those of the Palestinians, too – it is incumbent upon us, Israelis and Palestinians, Arabs and Jews, to strive for better futures for all of us.

Along with 100,000 other Israelis, I completed that last week in October by attending a rally in Tel Aviv marking the 20th anniversary of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination. Twenty wasted years. We can't afford to waste any more. I'm afraid we will. ■

Jewish Life



Klezmer harp player rediscovers blues

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jason Rosenblatt, who's best known for playing harmonica with the klezmer band Shtreiml, is releasing a CD of original blues and jazz tunes, musical genres his parents introduced him to.

Growing up, Rosenblatt, now 42, listened to his parents' extensive collection of blues and early jazz records and tapes. "My parents were of that generation that was interested in the blues and they passed on that music to me," Rosenblatt said.

At 13, an unenthusiastic piano student, Rosenblatt one day put on an album by Professor Longhair, the legendary New Orleans blues pianist, and played along with it. "It was one of the first times I had ever taken music I was interested in playing and tried to figure it out on my own," Rosenblatt said.

When he was 15, he picked up one of his dad's harmonicas. His father, Bernard, a doctor, played harmonica in a doctors and nurses band.

At first, Rosenblatt practised along with blues records, but at 16 – "a young Jewish kid with braces and a kippah," he remembered – he ventured into Montreal's blues bars.

At one of the clubs, he saw harmonica whiz Jim Zeller. "I would sit in the club and listen, and I would have a harmonica in my pocket, and when he was done with his set, I would run outside and practice the various licks that I heard," Rosenblatt said. He went on to study with Howard Levy, a master of the diatonic harmonica.

"Everything he played on the instrument was radically different, and it went beyond my expectations of what the instrument can do, and I said to myself, 'I have to play like that,'" Rosenblatt recalled.

He pays tribute to Levy on his new CD with the composition *C Harp Blues*. "I took an exercise he gave me and I turned it into a song," Rosenblatt said.

Since 2002, Rosenblatt has been performing a mix of eastern European Jewish and Turkish music in concert halls and at festivals with Shtreiml. The band's wedding repertoire includes the music of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, old-time chassidic, modern chassidic, classic rock, Motown, R&B and bluegrass.

Rosenblatt wrote and recorded *Wiseman's Rag* because blues and early jazz was the first music he loved and because he wanted to get away from his "comfort zone of doing Jewish music," he said.

Some of the songs on his 13-track CD – with Rosenblatt on harmonica, piano, Hammond B3 organ and vocals; Joe Grass on guitar; Joel Kerr on bass; and Evan Tighe on drums – are named after streets in Montreal.

The track *Wiseman's Rag*, a ragtime piece that pays homage to Jelly Roll Morton, got its title from Wiseman Street in Outremont, where Rosenblatt lives.

Modern Life Blues sounds like a break-up song. In one verse Rosenblatt writes: "You told me many times before/ You'd never walk out the front door/ I guess I didn't really know how bad you were feeling/ My special request for a second chance/ Was denied at first glance."

But the lyrics aren't autobiographical, the father of four said.

"I'm 42 years old, and I have a bunch of kids at home, and things aren't always easy and don't always go smoothly. And when you're writing a blues song, why settle for 'It's not so bad'? Either it's terrible or phenomenal, and I went to the terrible side of things. So it's not autobiographical, thank God."

Rosenblatt added that his lyrical inspiration for the CD is Cole Porter, whose lyrics are known for their wit, sophistication and clever rhymes.

The song *Last Plane Out*, written in New Orleans blues style, reflects the fact that Rosenblatt has been on the road alone recently, he said. Now that he and his wife, Rachel, who plays trombone in Shtreiml, have four children, aged 7, 5, 3 and 11 months, "she decided she didn't want to come on every tour" with the band, he said, although the whole family joined him for Shtreiml's West Coast tour of folk festivals this past summer. ■

The Jason Rosenblatt Quartet launches Wiseman's Rag at GigSpace in Ottawa on Dec. 12. For more information, visit www.jasonrosenblatt.com.

YIDDISH CORNER

אַז די וועלט ל .כט – איז דאָ פֿון וועמען און וואָס צו לאַכן

GERRY KANE
yankele635@gmail.com

פֿאַר יידן איז דאָס וואָרט הייליק. איך שרייב דאָ נישט וועגן דעם אייבערשטנס תורה נאָר וועגן די פּראַקטישע און קלוגע שפּריכוועדטלעך, די שבתדיקע און וואָכיקע, וואָס ווי א מאָלערס פּאָליטרע שפּיגלען אָפּ די פֿאַרבן פֿון לעבן.

אונדזערע שפּריכוועדטער, איידל אָדער ווילגאַר, זענען א פּאָקוס פֿון לעבן דורך אלע דורות. ווי שפּיגלען אָפּ דעם דיסעם פֿון חוכם און וויצוויזיק אין גוטע און שלעכטע צייטן. זיי זענען פּראַקטיש און קלוג. שפּריכוועדטער זענען די חכמה פֿון א פֿאָלק וועגן זיך אליין.

אריאל קאָפּראָוו, א געוועזענער מיטגליד פֿון דעם קאַמיטעט פֿאַר יידיש אין טאָראָנטאָ האָט געשריבן אין דעם אַרטיקל צו זיין כּוונ, "א וועלט מיט חכמה", אז דאָס כאַראַקטעריסטישע פֿאַרן יידישן הומאָר איז דאָס וואָס דער ייד לאַכט קודם כל אָפּ פֿון זיך אליין און ערשט דערנאָך פֿון אַנדערע. מיר שטעלן דאָ א שניט פֿון שפּריכוועדטער וואָס קוכען אַרויס פֿון פֿאָלקס מויל.

אַז מען זייט געלט וואַקסן נאַראַנים.

אַז מען לייגט זיך מיט היטע שטייט מען אויף מיט פּלי.

אַן עולם איז ניט קיין גולם.

עס איז בעסער פֿון אַ קלוגער אַ פֿאַטש, איידער פֿון אַ נאַר אַ קוש.

א ליגנער מוז האָבן אַ גוטן זכרון.

א בּרויגזער שלאָפּט אַליין.

דאָס לייכסטע איז צו געבן איינעם אַן עצה, דאָס שוועדסטע זיך אַליין.

מען קען האָבן געלט אַ הויפֿן, אָבער פֿון טויט קאָן מען זיך נישט אויסקויפֿן.

זאָג מיר ווער דיינע חברים זענען, וועל איך דיר זאָגן ווער דו ביזט.

אין דער פּינצטער מעג יעדע געליבטע זאָגן אַז זי איז די שענסטע אין דער ווּעלט.

דאָס בעסט קלייד אין ווּעלכער אַ פּרוי פֿילט זיך גוט איז ווען זי גייט אין די הויזן.

אַן אידעאַלער מאַן איז דער ווּעלכער געהערט אַן אַנדער פּרוי.

מענטשן ווילן לעבן לאַנג אָבער זיי שרעקן זיך פֿאַר דער עלטער.

א שיכור איז א קאָלערפֿולער מענטש: האָט א רויטע נאָז, א וויסע לעבער, שוואַרץ אונטער די אויגן, א בלאָ פּנים און שטענדיק איז אים פּינצטער פֿאַר די אויגן.

ווי פיל יאָר ער איז געגאַנגען אויף די פּיס זאָל ער ניין אויף די הענט, און די איבעריקע זאָל ער זיך שאַרן אויפֿן הינטן.

הייראַט איז א טראַגיקציע, ביי ווּעלכער א מאַן פֿאַרפֿליכטעט זיך צו זאָגן א גאַנץ לעבן "יאָ" פֿאַר אַן אינציקן "יאָ" פֿון א פֿרוי.

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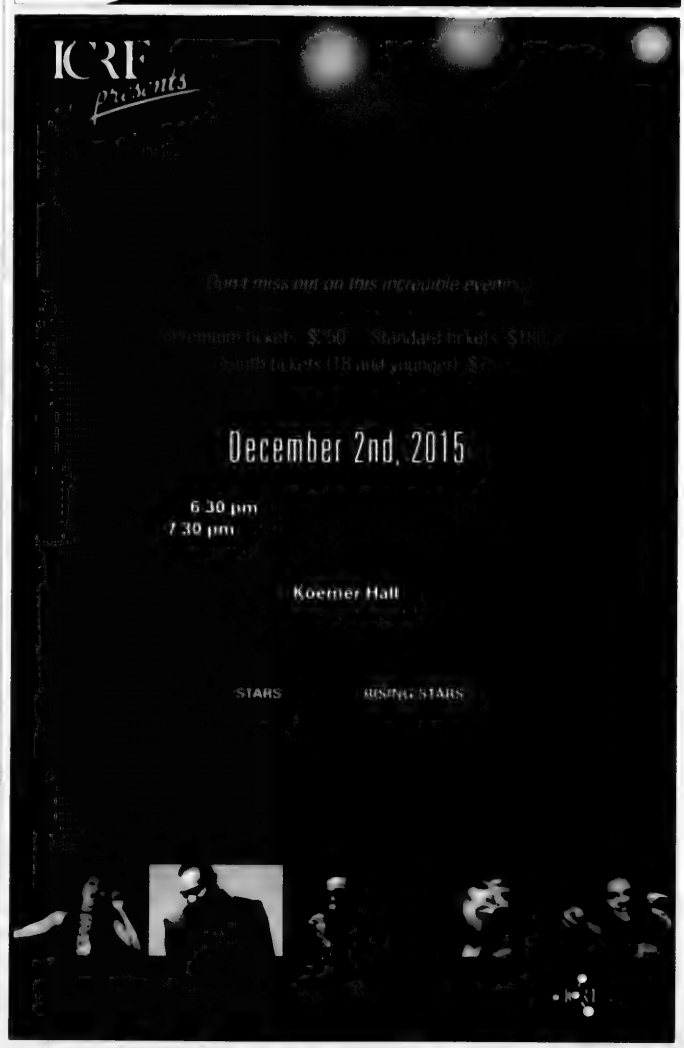

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 19, 2015

A unique insight into Jewish life in Imperial Russia

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In Vilna about 1860, a Jewish wife took a position as a domestic servant in the home of a wealthy man, but disappeared after her master sent her to get change for a 200-ruble bill. Eventually the case of "a male agun" or abandoned husband came to the attention of Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin of Volzhin.

"She [the wife] has been searched for extensively in Vilna, but without success," Rabbi Berlin noted in a responsa. "And her husband is bereft and grieving that the joy of offspring is denied to him. He seeks to marry another wife and to build himself a home."

Seeking a remedy that would not result in the husband committing bigamy, Rabbi Berlin ultimately decided that the man need not continue his futile search for a wife who had deserted him. "In this case, where she has betrayed him and taken herself far from him to the point where he cannot divorce her, he is not obliged to go out and shout at the hills and the like. Rather one may be lenient, and allow him another wife."

Many rabbinical items are among the assortment of translated documents that appear in *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia*, a wide-ranging compendium culled from memoirs, rabbinical responsa, court records, police records and other official sources.

The documents were found in archives in Kiev, Odessa, Zhitomir, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Vilnia, reflecting the continuing discoveries that Judaic scholars are making in diverse archives across the former Soviet Union. They focus on a broad spectrum of activities of ordinary Jewish daily life in Russia from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries.

Topics include religious dilemmas, conversions to Christianity, family life, marriage and divorce, health and sexuality, mental illness, marital and extramarital sex, school and university life, commerce and trade, agricultural colonies and farms, factory work, military conscription, anti-Semitism and pogroms, revolutionary movements, Zionism and emigration.

Some of the documents presented, such as Shura Broun's "Petition for a Separate Passport on Grounds of Spousal Abuse (1900)" are so personal and painful that the reader wants to cringe. There is also a report on an illegal abortion in Vilna, petitions to hospitalize various mentally ill patients, a report on attempts to close a Jewish brothel in Kiev, discussion of self-mutilation to avoid military conscription, and a description of a violent night in the tavern.

In 1887, "melamed" [teacher] Girsh Korobochko of Gorodok was accused of teaching children without a melamed's certificate. Although Korobochko argued that he only taught the children at school to recite prayers orally and did not receive any monetary compensation, and that he was unaware he was committing a crime, he was found guilty and slapped with a ruinous fine of 25 rubles, a verdict that was upheld upon appeal.

As other incidents described in the book testify, such difficult bureaucratic struggles and unnecessarily harsh and cruel verdicts seemed all too common in Old Russia. Such episodes put one in mind of the old Yiddish saying, "You could live, if only they would let you."

Everyday incidents are also captured in bedrooms, medical clinics, law offices, synagogues and factories. The editors have privileged us with many telling glimpses of the great frieze that was Jewish civilization in Russia over a period of about 150 years. However, we must remember that we are dealing with fragmented pieces out of context. We must take care that our impressions do not lead us to sweeping conclusions.

Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia: Select Documents, 1772-1914
by Chaeran Y. Freeze and Jay M. Harris, editors

Brandeis University Press

The editors deal with this and other interpretive problems in the preface and introduction, noting that "the focus on the individual, the local, and the singular inevitably raises the issue of typicality." How unique or how typical are the events described in the documents? The editors cite historian Henri Lefebvre, who once noted that even the most mundane act, such as a woman buying sugar, represents "an infinitely complex social event."

The editors also acknowledge that their approach is part of a modern shift away from grand narratives of political history to the everyday aspects of the lives of ordinary people, from making love to making a living.

• • •

A good companion volume to read alongside *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia* is Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern's *The Golden Age Shtetl: A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe*, (Princeton) which received fuller treatment here last year.

Petrovsky-Shtern also uncovered a range of recently accessible archival documents in painting a revised portrait of the Russian shtetl. He argued that for much of its history the shtetl was not the semi-decrepit, decaying village as described in late-19th-century Yiddish literature, but rather a thriving economic centre focused around its market square.

While later travellers would often emphasize the dirt, stench and poverty of the shtetl, reports in the "golden age" often focused on the fertility and idyllic beauty of the countryside. After the Russians exerted a prohibitive set of tariffs, customs duties and protective regulations, bribes and the smuggling of contraband goods became routine and the shtetl began its downfall.

As in *Everyday Jewish Life in Imperial Russia*, the author of *The Golden Age Shtetl* uncovers many police, court and other documents revealing unsavoury aspects of Jewish life. Again, one must be careful about drawing conclusions about the "typicality" of such activities and the relative proportion of Jewish rogues and criminals among the general population. ■

New publisher to produce original Jewish-themed books

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Two titans in the realm of Canadian Jewish publishing have been named as co-publishers of the New Jewish Press, an ambitious venture by the University of Toronto's Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies to produce original Jewish-themed books for the general reading public.

The New Jewish Press "is a logical extension of the Centre's core mission, which is to bring Jewish studies to the broader community," said co-publisher Malcolm Lester, a book-trade veteran whose previous credits have included such celebrated works as *None Is Too Many*, *The Riot at Christie Pits* and *A Good Place to Come From*.

Until recently, the other co-publisher Andrea Fochs Knight was managing editor of the Azrieli Series of Holocaust Survivor Memoirs and had previously worked with Lester at Malcolm Lester Books.

The New Jewish Press may launch its first four or five titles in October 2016 with production of another eight or 10 titles in 2017, she said.

"The range of titles will be fiction, non-fiction and literary non-fiction. They're not aimed at a scholarly audience. They won't be full of footnotes. Our goal is to bridge the academy and the community, as we say, to produce books that are of interest to scholars and also be accessible to the public."

The new publishing venture is based on "a different model," she continued, "in that it has many of the characteristics of a trade house but it's operating within the university. It's a model that's funded partly by donations – it's not entirely dependent on book sales. So, in that sense, we've opted to avoid some of the pitfalls that a new trade house might face."

The co-publishers concur that the new venture will be a "niche publisher" that will seek out specific kinds of titles, such as in the field of Canadian Jewish history, that large publishing companies may not care to produce.

Donors who wish to assist the New Jewish Press will receive tax receipts from the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies. However, donors may not underwrite publication of a specific title. Final decisions about what titles to publish will be made by an editorial committee consisting of the two co-publishers and professors Anna Shternshis, Doris Bergen, David Novak and Harold Troper.

"I'm absolutely delighted to be working with the Centre on this timely new publishing venture," said Lester, while Fochs Knight said she was excited at the prospect of bringing "a broad new range of Canadian Jewish voices" into print. ■

Comedian's outerwear raises funds for Holocaust awareness

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There's a lineup snaking around the block to get into Toronto's Bloor Hot Docs Cinema. Hundreds of young people are huddled together; some have been waiting outside for hours despite the cold and rainy mid-November weather. No, it's not TIFF. Comedian Nathan Fielder is in town for back-to-back, sold-out shows.

Fielder is the Canadian mastermind behind the Comedy Central program *Nathan For You* (Comedy Network in Canada). During each half-hour episode, he comes up with absurd marketing strategies for ailing Los Angeles-area companies. He is behind viral sensations such as Dumb Starbuck.

While his now three seasons of work usually provoke deep belly laughs, one of his latest stunts isn't quite as comedic. That's because it involves the Holocaust.

Fielder, formerly a correspondent on *This Hour Has 20 Minutes*, recently found out his favourite outerwear company, Taiga, featured Holocaust denier Doug Collins in one of its winter catalogues. Fielder says he had been wearing Taiga jackets for around 10 years.

"As a Jew, I was like, 'oh crap,'" says the 32-year-old Vancouver native while on *Conan*, Conan O'Brien's late night show. "In searching for a replacement, I couldn't be sure that any other jacket companies weren't hiding dark secrets as well."

So, he decided to create his own windbreaker brand, one that would also promote Holocaust awareness.

He calls his new venture Summit Ice and currently sells jackets, toques and t-shirts online. Best of all, 100 per cent of the profits will go directly to the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre (VHEC).

Nina Krieger, executive director of the VHEC, didn't hear about Fielder until someone forwarded her the *Conan* clip.

"There's a certain absurdity of a clothing company expressing sympathies for Holocaust denial that, based on what I've seen, has been reframed by Nathan as this opportunity for promoting Holocaust education," she says.

"And the VHEC would hope, further learning about the events and lessons of the Holocaust."

Krieger hasn't seen the *Nathan For You* episode that introduced Summit Ice. It aired on Oct. 22 and followed Fielder as he tried to get his brand into a Los Angeles-area store.

Nathan Fielder in a promo pic for his show.

He employed a local rabbi to ensure that he was making an impact on the Holocaust education front. Yet, this veered into unsettling territory as his retail display included swastikas and a gas chamber.

Krieger notes that anything that belittles the events of the Holocaust is troubling.

"The VHEC, like other organizations dedicated to Holocaust education and remembrance, is sensitive to the trivialization of the Holocaust and anything that minimizes the suffering of the victims and survivors," she says.

At first glance, Fielder's episode appears rather tasteless. As does his website, which includes photos of celebrities in Summit Ice jackets with captions such as, "Actor Rob Lowe looking cool and Holocaust conscious in one of our fleece-lined softshell jackets."

And, "*Knocked Up* star Seth Rogen agrees that the systematic extermination of Jews in Europe was 'superbad.'"

Yet, after hearing from Krieger, Fielder's mission becomes clearer: he's using comedy to show how ridiculous it is for any consumer brand to associate itself with controversial figures and emotionally charged events.

"I think that he may have created something potent and provocative with the Summit Ice apparel venture," says Krieger. And, he's encouraging his audience to learn more about the Shoah.

Krieger notes that the VHEC's web traffic has increased since the Summit Ice episode and as of Nov. 10, Fielder has racked up more than $110,000 in sales, confirms his manager Dan McManus.

Fielder doesn't bring up his new company while in Toronto on Nov. 10, but there is a Summit Ice jacket on stage. And his thousands of fans know exactly what that seemingly innocuous windbreaker means. ■

To access the VHEC's online exhibitions and resources, visit vhec.org. Summit Ice apparel is available at www.summiticeapparel.com.

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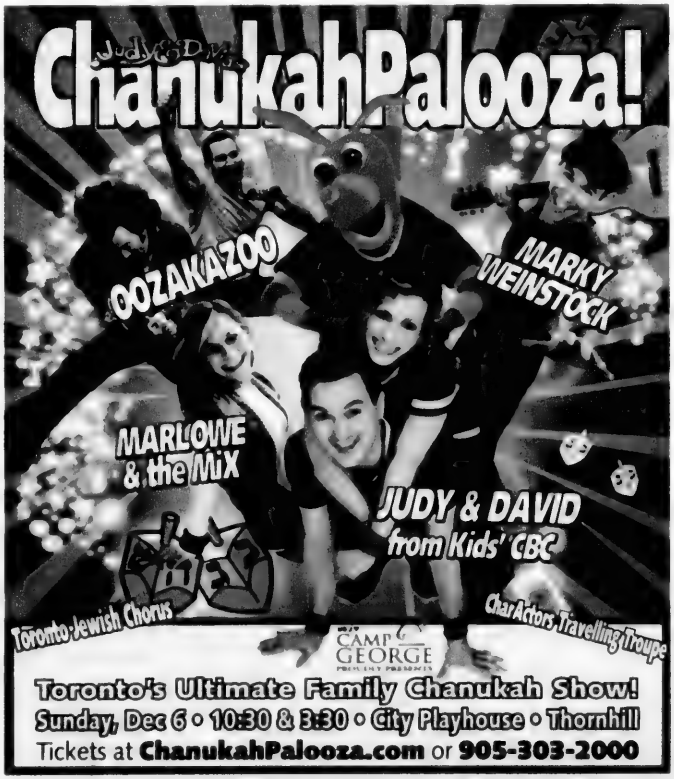

Dominica: A feast for the senses

MELODY WREN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Through my window on the tiny four-seater plane, I was captivated by the lushness and dense greens of the thick jungle of trees completely covering the tiny island. No jumbo planes are allowed, as planes have to slam to an abrupt stop on the very short runway.

When you have guests for dinner, you don't blurt out the dishes you are serving as soon as they arrive. Dropped into the Lesser Antilles, this far-flung island plays the same way, teasing gently with appetizers in the form of something simple to whet your appetite. Unlike other Caribbean islands that flaunt their attributes, Dominica doesn't reveal its personality immediately.

A dizzying drive through winding mountainous roads led us to the ocean side cottages we were staying in. With 365 rivers, one for every day, navigating this small island of only 740 square kilometres takes time.

The salad course provides more substance to a meal, and in Dominica seeing the huge array of waterfalls you slowly get an idea of what the untamed island is about. The natural rugged beauty of the island is the lure as is the simple way of life. Without distractions, the singing of the birds is emphasized, as is the gentle sound of the rivers burbling, and the rustling of the trees in the dense rainforest.

The other tourists with me are hikers, adventurers, bird watchers, divers and sailors. One Norwegian tourist who sailed from the British Virgin Islands said that he has travelled all over the world and returns to Dominica for the uniqueness, unusually huge number of waterfalls, the sulphur springs, and the boiling lake.

A silver domed lid comes off in a flourish of the main course, which for me was the Champagne Reef Snorkel Tour.

I have snorkelled in other locations, which seemed astounding at the time, but this was definitely a substantial main course. Our guide – wearing brilliant yellow shorts so we didn't lose track of him-led us through the clear aquamarine water, pointing out fish we wouldn't have seen otherwise. Snorkelling near a live volcano created bubbles that were frequent attracting huge numbers of startlingly beautiful fish. After showering and changing we were lured towards the aroma of the on site charcoal barbeque roasting local fish and vegetables.

Dessert, the grand finale, was getting totally immersed in the natural surroundings as part of island life. Hiking the Waitukubuli National Trail is an ideal way to see the local trees and take in bird watching, an activity that brings tourists to the island from all over the world. The trail is a first of its kind – one of the longest hiking trails in the Caribbean, covering 185 kilometres, spanning and twisting the length of Dominica on unique and varied terrain.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Dominica's Twin Falls MELODY WREN PHOTO

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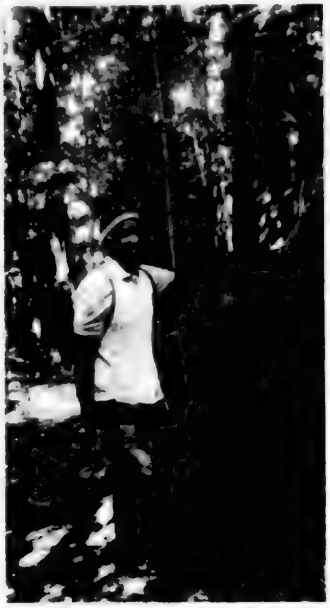

Along the hike trail, left, and the Indian River. MELODY WREN PHOTOS

We only hiked a portion of it, but it does continue through coastal villages, up woodland hills, into lush rainforests, past waterfalls, down to rivers, back up to the mountains and down to the sea again. The island's unique and varied terrain and natural beauty earns its nickname, the Nature Island.

We visited Trafalgar Falls, a short distance from the trail and took a short 15-minute hike to get a close look at the unusual twin waterfalls.

As Sparrow, the local guide, rowed us up the Indian River near Portsmouth, he pointed out seaside hibiscus, whose flowers turn from yellow to orange as they age. Egrets, moor hens, kingfishers and different types of herons were interspersed with bolts of colourful flowers. He told us the history of the island, settled originally by native people including the Arawaks.

We paddled past places used as sets in *Pirates of the Caribbean* film, including a dock shaded by mangrove-like trees that belongs to the Bush Bar, a favourite hangout of Johnny Depp's during filming, according to Sparrow, a rustic open hut where you can order a number of homemade drinks, primarily made up of rum. Tall trees and elongated roots lined the wide river as we navigated our way through.

Indian River is the deepest river on the island, named after the Caribe Indians who went up the mountains.

Island hopping is common in this part of the Caribbean as ferries or chartered boats make it easy. As Dominica is so close to the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, you can plan to visit all three or take the short flight from Antigua.

When I think back to the authenticity of Dominica, my body relaxes and my mind almost meditates, summing up the island perfectly. As a local said about Christopher Columbus landing there, he added, "It is one of the few Caribbean islands he would still recognize." ■

Where to stay:

There are several options on the island depending on what you are looking for:

I stayed at Picard Cottages for two nights: plain, simple, rustic cottages with all the basics covered. The simplicity of the cottages fit perfectly with the surroundings, standing on six acres of an old coconut plantation. The private cottages offer access to the beach and views over Prince Rupert Bay. www.picardbeachcottages.com

Rosalie Bay Resort: I only had one night at this elegant, luxurious resort. Nestled at the foothills of the More Trios Pitons on the southeast coast, it sits on 22 verdant acres at the intersection of the Atlantic Ocean and the crystal clear Rosalie River. The heavenly setting has everything you need right on the premises, but if you want to get out and explore, the management has a list of island tours they will arrange. Make sure you pick up soft cotton waffle weave robes, locally made soap dishes and carvings from the on site shop. www.rosaliebay.com

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Presenting a how-*not*-to guide for your 20s and 30s

DANIEL KOREN
dkoren@thecjn.ca

Most of us have people we keep around in our lives purely for their optimistic nature, like the friend who reassures you that it wasn't a big deal when you scanned your girlfriend's texts to see who she was talking to, or so what that you answered your phone during an important job interview?

Josh Gondelman, co-founder of the *Modern Seinfeld* Twitter account and staff writer on *Last Week with John Oliver*, and writer Joe Berkowitz, however, actually give it to you straight with their new book: *You Blew It!: An Awkward Look at the Many Ways in Which You've Already Ruined Your Life*(Plume).

For a comedian like Gondelman, someone who's been lauded for his kindness over and over again, the book, at least from its title, offers a bleak and pessimistic view on life. Its actual content, however, proves to inspire more giggles than remorse.

"The premise of the book is, here's how you ruin your life, so you should steer away from these things," Gondelman explains to *The CJN*. "I don't know if it's necessarily satire, as it's not a parody of anything, but just a silly book of advice disguised as non-advice with jokes. It's simply jokes."

It sure is. The best advice, says Gondelman, is non-advice. "Stay in relationships and at jobs long past they're enjoyable and fulfilling because you'll never know when your next meal is going to come from and you never know if you'll find someone better," he says. "Find something that works and stick with it as long as you can."

Josh Gondelman

> *It's a silly book of advice disguised as non-advice with jokes.*

You Blew It! has been aptly described as a how-*not*-to guide for your 20s and 30s. It's a "here's how to ruin any situation" as opposed to a "here's exactly what to do," says Gondelman. "If you steer clear of this terrible behaviour, you'll find the spectrum of appropriate behaviour."

The book has an "underlying tone" that tells readers when things objectively feel good, you can still feel bad, and that's OK. "Maybe you did this ridiculous thing and screwed up a job interview or Thanksgiving, but everything good can always go bad. The flip side is everything bad is a hair's-breadth away from being good," he says, adding, "in terms of etiquette, of course. Not medical diagnosis or criminal charges."

As a purveyor of Jerry Seinfeld and Larry David-influenced content, Gondelman (who describes himself as an Elaine, except for on his bad days when he's "definitely a George") essentially has a PhD in Jewish comedy.

"The book is definitely located within the tradition of Jewish humour," he says, "as it's really fixated on specific things, and having specific, unwritten rules that are important, and wanting to codify those rules. That's the best part about *Seinfeld*, taking an unwritten rule, putting a name on it and saying, 'Look at this, this is what I'm talking about, you can't be a closer talker', or 'there's good naked and bad naked,' and I think this book continues that tradition."

He also notes an occasion during his Jewish upbringing that had a profound effect on his love for comedy. "I remember when I was 10, my grandfather received an award at his synagogue, I believe from Moshe Waldoks [co-author of *The Big Book of Jewish Humour*]. I fell over laughing, and read that book cover to cover. There was a lot of people you could look at in the tradition of Jewish humour and relate to, like, 'That guy's like me, we have similar sensibility, I relate to the things they're saying.' Like Mel Brooks, for example. He looks like someone I would know."

While *You Blew It!* can, at times, be personal, as a stand-up comedian and social media star, Gondelman's all too accustomed to being exposed. "When you do standup and people don't like it, you know they don't like it since you're in the room with them. So a book provides considerable more shelter and protection. I can just not read reviews. Very few people will actually reach out and say, 'Hey, I read your book and I hated it, and you're garbage,' whereas when you're on stage, you will feel the goodwill leaving the room."

In addition to writing tweets for *Modern Seinfeld*, and working full time on *Last Week with John Oliver*, Gondelman is also out four to five times a week doing standup comedy, which to him isn't even enough. "People who are in standup are easily doing 10 to 14 sets a week," he says. "I know the 'grass is greener' on the other side of the fence, but I just want all the grass."

However, it seems that Gondelman's lawn is one that would invoke more envy, noting his good fortune at working alongside Oliver on the acclaimed HBO show. "Sometimes I'll write the joke, and the way he'll do it is a hundred times funnier than I imagined it," he says.

As for his favourite *Seinfeld* episode, it's *The Switch* (where George and Jerry scheme a way for Jerry to date his current girlfriend's roommate). "I remember seeing that episode as a young teen and thinking, 'Yeah, that makes sense, that's what adult life is probably like.'" ■

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Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

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Cookbook features cherished memories

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Terraces of Baycrest has published a kosher cookbook of family recipes accompanied by anecdotes that reflect Jewish life in Canada and Europe from the turn of the 20th century to the present day.

More than 70 residents contributed to the Terrace's cookbook, aptly named *A Ta'am to Remember*. Ta'am means taste in Yiddish and Hebrew and many of the recipes are accompanied by personal memories of shtetl life, the Great Depression, the Holocaust, the immigrant experience and/or raising families during the postwar years.

A Ta'am to Remember, which was edited by *CJN* food columnist and author Norene Gilletz, will be launched on Nov. 29 at 2 p.m. in the assembly room of the Terraces. Gilletz, who has written 12 kosher cookbooks, will be there along with Lorraine and David "Sonny" Langer, sponsors of the cookbook.

Langer, a popular Toronto caterer, was the first administrator of the Terraces, when it opened in April 1976. The party for the cookbook will kick off celebrations marking the 40th anniversary of the Terraces.

Back in 2007 the late Rachel Orlan, a Terraces resident, set out to publish a cookbook of recipes and stories as a fundraiser for the Terraces. The staff began collecting recipes and they also asked Elaine Kaplan, the daughter of one of the residents (Dorothy Riegelhaupt), to assist them, because Kaplan had worked closely with Gilletz.

She in turn recruited Gilletz, and soon dozens of volunteers joined the team and began testing recipes. Many of the Terraces residents who contributed recipes to *A Ta'am to Remember* were intuitive cooks who learned to prepare the various dishes without written recipes, Gilletz said. "I often had to quantify and modify many ingredients and clarify the directions, but I always maintained the integrity of these recipes."

Kaplan, the project director, noted with sadness that many of the contributors to the cookbook have died and did not have a chance to see their names, recipes and stories in print.

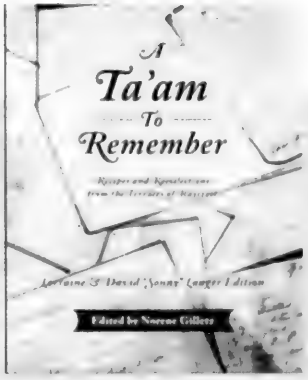
"We hope the families of the contributors will cherish their stories and treasure their recipes." For more information about *A Ta'am to Remember*, visit www.baycrestterracescookbook.com or call 416-785-2500 ext. 2267.

Red lentil soup

Submitted by Jean Goldstein

- ❑ 1¼ cups red lentils
- ❑ ½ cup white rice
- ❑ warm water for soaking
- ❑ ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ❑ 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- ❑ 8 cups hot water
- ❑ 1½ tbsp. instant pareve chicken soup mix
- ❑ 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ❑ 1 tbsp. olive oil
- ❑ salt to taste
- ❑ lemon wedges to garnish (optional)

Place lentils and rice in a medium bowl and add water to cover. Soak for 20 to 30 minutes. Drain and rinse well. Meanwhile, heat vegetable oil in a large pot on medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until it turns golden about 5 minutes. Add hot water and bring the mixture to a boil. Stir in drained lentils and rice. Simmer, covered, for 25 to 30 minutes until lentils and rice are tender. Add soup mix, cumin, olive oil and salt. Stir well. If the soup is too thick, add water as needed. Simmer 5 to 10 minutes longer. Adjust the seasonings to taste. Garnish each serving with a lemon wedge, if desired. Yield: 8 servings ■



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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 19, 2015

History of Catskills detailed in engrossing book

TOBY SALTZMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

You would expect a book on the Catskills to be funny.

"I know that," says Stephen Silverman, author of *The Catskills: Its History and How It Changed America*. "When people asked what I am working on – 'a book on the Catskills' – they'd say, 'Oh, that must be so funny.' And I would say, 'I'm really dealing with more than that.'"

"Sure," Silverman continues. "The Catskills was the training ground for all the names we know: Jackie Mason, Billy Crystal, Shecky Green, Jerry Seinfeld (he's basically one of the last), and a lot of names no one knows any more, like Myron Cohen. They knew their audience, and the audience knew them. Alan King – the quintessential product of the Catskills – and Mel Brooks – who cannot say anything that's not funny: these comedians and the audience spoke the same language, and I'm not talking about Yiddish or English." Silverman certainly delivers funny, laugh-out-loud moments as his meticulously researched opus sets the stage for Borscht Belt humour, but the book deals with more than that.

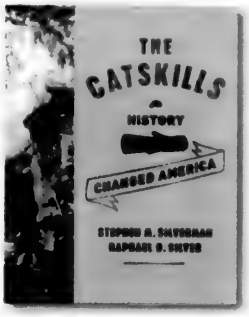
Pure history is rarely an easy read. "I'm informing the reader, but it's gotta be entertaining." He engages interest in the history of America's first frontier and first vacation land with literary aplomb, portraying fascinating vignettes peppered with idiosyncratic characters who ultimately shaped the modern American experience.

From Henry Hudson – whose 1609 voyage up the "Great River of Mountains" led to the naming of Hudson River – to the Civil War, the introduction of steamboat and train travel, the creation of the automobile, and the rise of New York City, to La Kvell Epoch – the glory days of the Jewish resorts – Silverman gives each era in this brilliantly illustrated book historic context, ultimately depicting the Catskills as an incubator of American culture.

Silverman honed his journalistic acumen as a journalism professor at Columbia University, working more than 10 years as chief entertainment writer of the *New York Post*, and spending the past 20 years as the founding editor of people.com and working with *Time*.

With painstaking detail, the author notes how works by America's first literary greats – Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and James Fennimore Cooper's fictitious frontiersmen and his *The Last of the Mohicans* – gave the Catskills enticing cachet as North America's first getaway destination. Besides people wishing to tread in the character's footsteps, artists – including Thomas Cole and Asher Durand – flocked to capture the light of romantic landscapes on canvas, giving birth to America's first art movement – the Hudson River School – prompting the rise of hotels to accommodate them.

Over time, development in the Catskills provoked legal wrangles with land grants and tenants' rights, while burgeoning industries – namely mining, leather tanning, and damming of Catskill rivers to provide fresh water for a growing New York City – exposed dire slavery issues. Meanwhile, as robber barons gained notoriety, so did undertones of anti-Semitism. Compelling details describe scenarios of business tycoon Jason "Jay" Gould – a Christian who fought rumours of being Jewish – and author John Burroughs, who argued with automobile king Henry Ford and inventor Thomas Edison over their anti-Semitic actions. In conversation, Silverman relates that Henry Ford was virulently bigoted to such an extent that – when the Ford Motor Company singly sponsored *Schindler's List* on NBC – the movie critic, Judith Crist (who, incidentally, had a house in the Catskills) wrote the company to say: "Now I think I could consider buying a Ford."



The Catskills: Its History and How It Changed America
by Stephen M. Silverman and Raphael D. Silver

Alfred A. Knopf

As interest in the Catskills percolated, the area became a rich man's playground, though not for Jews. In conversation, Silverman explains, "What's fascinating is that as soon as you say 'Catskills' people think that's where the Jews went. But they didn't. The Catskills themselves were restricted. Jews really didn't start going there until 1914. No hotels would accept them. What happened was the tuberculosis sanitarium opened there, and – when it was discovered that tuberculosis was highly contagious – the rich 'WASPs' who filled the hotels and had homes there, fled. Real estate prices plummeted. So who moved in? Jews from the Lower East Side. At first they wanted to farm, but the soil was no good. So they opened boarding houses and fed everybody: they had chickens and cows, so they served milk and eggs. And lots of it."

Indeed. Jews – among them Selig Grossinger – started renting out rooms, offering meals, and setting standards for America's hospitality industry that blossomed from the *kuchalayn* – where summer renters schlepped everything, from their own bedding to food – to the growth of swank resorts including Grossinger's, the Nevele and the Concord, among others.

The stories of the resorts and entertainers abound with funny shticks. "While writing, I was laughing out loud to myself – telling myself, 'don't overdo it,' especially about the resorts, the reactions to all the food, the overeating, the counting the minutes to the next meal." Hilarious, too, are descriptions of the matchmaking zealots.

With so much documented material – covering comedians to politicians to celebrity love scandals involving the glitterati Debbie Reynolds, Eddie Fisher and Elizabeth Taylor – Silverman admittedly edited his text frugally, leaving "words on the cutting room floor. I had to focus. The profile of Sid Cesar is tied to the fact that he started in the Catskills at a hotel owned by his wife's family. Then I showed his place in television history. Gertrude Berg – Molly Goldberg – started in the Catskills and based all her characters on the people she saw at the hotel her father managed."

Engrossing, too, are the tales of Prohibition-era gangsters and bootleggers who retreated to the remote Catskills terrain "by hook or by crook." Arnold Rothstein, aka "Moses of the Mafia," who – besides being credited with bribing some Chicago White Sox players to allow the Cincinnati Reds to win the 1919 World Series – supposedly inspired F. Scott Fitzgerald's Meyer Wolfsheim in *The Great Gatsby* and Damon Runyon's character Nathan Detroit in the Broadway musical *Guys and Dolls*.

"Those who get it, will get it. To be like Jackie Mason, this book will appeal to both Jews and gentiles. The Jews will laugh about the food. The gentiles may not get it, but at least they will be informed." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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The Socialite wants your photos.
Email thesocialite@thecjn.ca
for submission details.

The Socialite

Rob Storm, Lisa Borden, Joey Storm, Barry Borden, Ryan Storm and Susan Borden

Rob Wilder, Jackie Rothstein, Michelle Rothstein and Anthony Rose

Risa Alyson Cooper and Dr. Andrea Most

Alisha Kaplan, Jodi Katzeff, Danny Richmond, Sarah Clement and Neil Hirsch

Jaime Slavin and Dina Rock

Taking Root

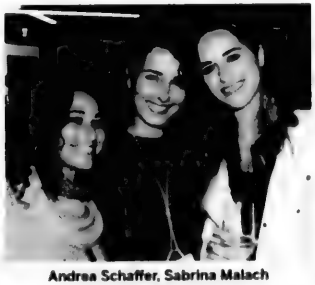
Seven dynamic speakers including Anthony Rose (executive chef and founder of Rose and Sons), Debbie Field (executive director of Food Share), Ran Goel (founder of Fresh City Farms), Rabbi Rafi Lipner (senior rabbi of Shaarei Tefillah and executive director of The House), and Ryan Storm (14-year-old revolutionary food blogger) shared inspiring stories at the recent event honouring Shoresh Jewish Environmental Programs' seventh year. Funds from this event will go to support the next seven years of Shoresh's transformative work, connecting people, land, and spirit. ■ – *The Socialite*

Harriet Friedmann and Elizabeth Pasternak

Rochelle and Eli Rubinstein

Ryan Storm, Rabbi Rafi Lipner and Ran Goel

Rabbi Miriam Margles, Mati Cooper and Alon Nashman



Andrea Schaffer, Sabrina Malach and Lauren Lyons

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AARON ROTENBERG PHOTOS

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What's New

NOV. 19 - NOV. 26

by Lila Sarick

Teams of students from Ulpanot Orot, left, and Yeshivat Or Chaim are participating in the Jewish Unity Mentoring Program, a four-month program with NCSY, which challenges day school students from across North America to become the next generation of Jewish leaders.

Thursday, Nov. 19

IS ISLAM A RELIGION OF PEACE?
Liyakat Takim, professor at McMaster University, discusses "Is Islam really a religion of peace?" 7:30 p.m., Temple Har Zion.

FRUMBA
Pride of Israel Synagogue offers women's cardio dance fitness classes, Thursdays, noon. 416-226-0111.

BOOK CLUB
Shaar Shalom Synagogue's book club discusses *The Nightingale* by **Kristin Hannah,** 2 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 20

COMMUNITY KABBALAT SHABBAT
Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, speaks at a community Kabbalat Shabbat, 8 p.m., Temple Sinai.

Saturday, Nov. 21

RABBIS AT RISK
Rabbis Daniel Korobkin, Reuven Tradburks, Tzvi Hersh Weinreb and **Dr. Michelle Friedman** discuss "Rabbis at risk: Why we should care," 7 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. www.torahinmotion.org.

CAMP RAMAH LIVE
New and returning campers in grades 1-4 are invited to a Camp Ramah party at Beach Blast, 6-8 p.m. $5. RSVP www.campramah.com.

WELCOME HOME CONCERT
Cantors Jeremy Burko, David Edwards, Sidney Ezer, Benny Maissner, The Young Guns Quartet and **The Varsity Jews** perform at Beth Radom Congregation, 7:30 p.m. $18/$25, students, $10. For tickets, 416-636-3451, ext. 24.

TORAH CLASS
Morley Goldberg leads the Torah study class at Beth Tikvah Congregation, Shabbat morning.

Sunday, Nov. 22

BOOK LAUNCH
Rabbi Leo Davids has a book launch for *Right On Time: The Torah Approach to Punctuality,* 9:30 a.m., Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation.

RENEWING OUR SPIRIT
The 14th annual Renewing Our Spirit conference will be held at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, 9:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. 416-633-5770.

HOLIDAY COOKING
Elaine Cooper prepares multicultural Chanukah dishes, 3 p.m., Congregation Darchei Noam. $20/$25. Register at www.darcheinoam.ca

HADASSAH OPEN HOUSE
Canadian Hadassah-WIZO is holding an open house in the Yonge and Davisville area, 7-9 p.m. To register, 416-630-8373 or visit hwo.convio.net/openhouse

JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL
Isme Bennie discusses her book, *White Schooldays,* 11 a.m. Prosserman JCC. Co-sponsored by Temple Sinai.

HIGHWAY OF TEARS
Temple Emanu-El shows the film *Highway of Tears,* about missing and murdered aboriginal women, 7 p.m. **Gladys Radek,** founder of Tears4Justice, will speak after the film. Free. RSVP 416-449-3880.

SINGLES IN THE PARK
Philip Slayton discusses his new book, *Mayors Gone Bad,* to Singles in the Park, a group for single, divorced and widowed Jewish men and women over 55, 7 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre, 4169 Bathurst St. $10/$12. RSVP debbygo@rogers.com or 416-631-0005.

CARIBBEAN JEWISH EXPERIENCE
Rabbi Elyse Goldstein discusses "The Jews of Guatemala," 7:30 p.m., Congregation Darchei Noam. $5/$10.

AN AFTERNOON OF FOLK MUSIC
Faith Nolan performs folk music for Club Chaverut, 1:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. $7/$10. RSVP **Rose** 905-764-8141.

Monday, Nov. 23

THEY TOOK MANHATTAN
A cabaret performance of Broadway's greatest composers will be presented at Holy Blossom Temple, 8 p.m. $40. For tickets, 416-789-3291, ext. 224.

SMALL WONDERS
Small Wonders, supporting Jewish couples with infertility, holds a "Night of Wonders," 7 p.m. at Holt Renfrew. For tickets, 416-742-0090.

Tuesday, Nov. 24

LUNCH AND LEARN
Sara Diamond discusses "Jewish reflections in visual art," Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Dec. 3 is Nov. 23. All deadlines are at noon.
Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Louisa Mallis and **Karen Spivak** dicuss "Mindful meditation and cognitive behavioural therapy: tools for understanding and regulating your thoughts and emotions." Bring your lunch at noon, speakers at 12:30, Temple Har Zion. 3/$6.

PAPE AVENUE CEMETERY

Dara Solomon, director of the Ontario Jewish Archives, discusses the Pape Avenue Cemetery, with the Riverdale Historical Society, 6:30 p.m., St. Matthew's Clubhouse, 450 Broadview Ave. $5.

BLOOD DONOR CLINIC

A blood donor drive in honour of B'nai Brith Canada's **Michael Kates,** today, 4-8 p.m. and Nov. 26, 4-8 p.m., Hillcrest Mall, 9350 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. To book an appointment, go to www.blood.ca

Wednesday, Nov. 25

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Jars Balan discusses Rhea Clyman, who wrote articles about her 5,000-mile road trip in the fall of 1932 in eastern Ukraine and about the famine created by Stalin, 8 p.m., Temple Sinai. $5 for non-members. www.jgstoronto.ca or 647-247-6414.

Thursday, Nov. 26

GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a genealogy workshop, 7:30 p.m.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Call **Shawna Sidney,** 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless noted.

- **When you're about to separate, what to tell the kids:** A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation, Nov. 18, Lebovic JCC, 9:30 a.m.
- **Living with adult ADHD:** A 4-session group for adults who have been diagnosed with ADD or ADHD and want to learn strategies to create positive change in their lives. Starts Nov.25, 7 p.m. at Lipa Green Centre.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS

Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call Beth Feffer, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Nov. 19, 26, **Jonno Lightstone** discusses "Big band jazz," with live music, 1-3 p.m.; Nov. 19, social games club, play bridge, mah-jong or other games, 11 a.m; Dec. 17, Big band swing concert and dance with **Lenny Graf and his Platinum Swing Orchestra,** latke lunch 12:30 p.m., concert and dance, 1-2:30 p.m $15. RSVP 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or lisar@mnjcc.org.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9; Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.; exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Nov. 24, **Marietta Allbranti** discusses "From here to antiquity in ancient Egypt," 10 a.m.; Nov. 25, Retirement living fair, 10:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.; Nov. 26, lecture on "Introduction to social media: Facebook, Twitter and other sites for staying connected," 1:30 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; creative circle Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., bring your handiwork; barber/hairdresser Dec. 3, 10 a.m.
- **Association of Jewish Seniors:** Home fire safety with **Denise Hynes,** Nov. 19, 9:30 a.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. RSVP 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **National Council of Jewish Women-Aviva Chapter** is looking for senior women who would like to join, 416-633-5100.
- **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. 416-256-1892.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. **Judi** 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom Synagogue.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth Synagogue.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion.** Wednesdays, play bridge at 9:30 a.m.; mah-jong at 1 p.m.; Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com.
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge, mah-jong and canasta, Thursdays, 1:30-4 p.m. Call **Maureen,** 416-781-3514.
- **Beth Sholom Synagogue.** Creative exercise, lunch and cards, Wednesdays at noon. 416-783-6103.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- JCC Reads book club meets Nov. 23, 1 p.m.
- Film screening of *24 Days,* Nov. 22, 7 p.m.
- Film appreciation, "City of dreams: Los Angeles and San Francisco," Wednesdays, Dec. 2-16, 1 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Van Gogh and Gauguin, Friendship, rivalry and tragedy," Nov. 17- Dec.1, 1 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- *Portraits of Resilience,* photos of Holocaust survivors by **Elliot Sylman,** is on display at the gallery until Nov. 26.
- Post-natal Aquafit, Tuesdays 10 a.m. Babies must be six months old. Ext. 567.
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities. Sundays to Dec. 6, 1 p.m.
- Shabbat family party, spaces still available, Fridays, 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Ext. 388.
- Kat-Ka team, with Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror for children in grades 2-8, Nov. 29, 1-3:30 p.m. Experience Israel and Jewish social values in a welcoming social space. RSVP: shaliach.gesher@gmail.com.
- Jewish mindfulness-adult education, Nov. 29, 9:30 a.m. RSVP principal@djcs.org.
- Wheel dance: learn Latin dance in a mixed abilities class. Sundays to Dec. 6, 6 p.m. Ext. 330.
- Why does history matter today? U of T Press authors **Steven Bednarski, Franklin Bialystok and Kenneth Bartlett** discuss how our society has been shaped by important moments in history, Dec. 7, 14, 21 at 1:30 p.m.
- Open community choir, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. with **Gillian Stecyk.** No experience or audition required.
- Everyday Friends: social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Ext. 330
- **Iain Scott** discusses "Four of the greatest scenes from opera," Nov. 23, 1:30 p.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. For programs, ext. 3025.

- JCC Reads book club, Nov. 24, 10:30 a.m.
- Healthy U series: "Change your thoughts, change your life: how mindfulness affects your brain," Dec. 9, 7 p.m.
- Intermediate mah-jong starts Nov. 24, 10:30 a.m. ■

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WRY BREAD

Trudeau's cabinet balance upsets traditionalists

David Levine

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a splash with the recent announcement that his first cabinet includes an equal number of male and female representatives. And though the move has been widely hailed by Canadians, one Jewish organization is registering its objection.

In a statement released earlier this month, the Rabbinical Council of Canada (RCC) has again rejected the appointment of female cabinet members and called on the newly elected Trudeau to uphold more traditional structures that they say have defined Canada for generations.

Long respected as the seat of senior legislative authority, the Canadian cabinet has been famously dominated by a male membership – a tradition marred by antiquated stereotypes about the relative abilities of women. And while decades of social progress have yielded a steady increase in the number of women in senior federal roles, the cabinet has remained a stubborn outlier, with female membership failing to accurately reflect the demographics of the nation.

To many, Trudeau's selection of these female cabinet members represents a milestone in the quest for better legislation through better representation, but the RCC's response has been unequivocal: "In light of the announcement that Trudeau's government will celebrate the swearing-in of its first cabinet, and in response to the institution's claim that it 'is changing the communal landscape by actualizing the potential of women as government leaders,' the Rabbinical Council of Canada reasserts its position: the RCC views this event as a violation of our *mesorah* (tradition) and regrets that the leadership of the country has chosen a path that contradicts the norms of our community.

"In light of the opportunity created by advanced women's education, the Rabbinical Council of Canada encourages a diversity of halachically and communally appropriate professional opportunities for educated, committed women. Due to our aforesaid commitment to sacred continuity, however, we cannot accept either the ordination of women or the recognition of women as members of the cabinet, regardless of the title.

"Young Canadian women are now being reared, educated and inspired by mothers, teachers and mentors who are themselves beneficiaries of advanced women's education. As members of the new generation rise to positions of influence and stature, we pray that they will contribute to an ever-broadening and ever-deepening wellspring of studious, law-abiding, civic minded women who cherish and sentimentalize their place in the margins."

Alongside its statement, the RCC also released *Constructive Alternatives*, a document that outlines "reasonable and morally pure alternatives" to women being welcomed into the inner sanctum of Canadian political life. It's full of suggestions such as adopting the alternate title of "legal adviser," encouraging each female cabinet member to step down in exchange for a generous severance package, or the right to appoint her husband "or another suitably chromosomed individual" to her seat.

The statement was approved by a recent member vote, but in the hours following the announcement, social media was ablaze with support, indignation and rumours of a split within the totally real organization itself.

"As an RCC member, I'm proud to have voted against this motion," said Rabbi X, speaking on condition of anonymity. "These are exceptionally talented and qualified women who wish to dedicate themselves to public service. The notion that we have the right to exclude them is patently offensive."

Rabbi X is among what he calls a "vocal minority" of rabbis within the RCC who campaigned strenuously against the release of the statement.

"You mean re-release," Rabbi X points out. "The language is identical to the language that was approved years ago, when they first started considering women for these positions."

This redundancy has many critics calling the vote a cynical political exercise, meant only as a public rebuke to Trudeau's "activist" cabinet. Rabbi X and his cohorts agree, but have no plans to resign their membership in the RCC, an organization Rabbi X cherishes as "an indispensable moral compass." ■ *Twitter @adavidlevine*

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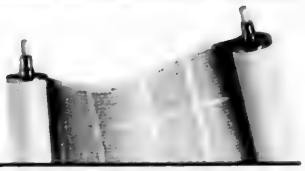
Parshah

Vayetzei | Genesis 28:10-32:3



Rabbi Aaron Katchen examines the tension between present and future
Rabbi Michal Shekel says there is something different about Rachel
Rabbi Howard Morrison looks for meaning in the word 'makom'

Aaron Katchen

"Like Rachel and Leah who both built the house of Israel" (Ruth 4:11).

Life is full of tension. We are constantly balancing between making the best of now and preparing for the future. If we only live in the "now," we sacrifice our financial security later in life, but looking forward is extremely difficult to maintain and can lead to being disconnected from the present.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first chief rabbi of pre-state Israel, attempts to reconcile this problem. He states that the ideal existence (in the Garden of Eden) was for the "taste of the tree to be like the taste of the fruit." To him, this means that we would benefit from our labours at every moment and not have to wait to see the payout from our efforts. We could thus stay focused on our goals through the validation that we're on the right path. But our reality doesn't reflect this ideal. The physical world is flawed, so we're left with the duality between now and tomorrow, temporal and eternal.

According to Rabbi Kook, the tension between Rachel and Leah in Parshat Vayetzei highlights this duality. Our ancestor Jacob loves Rachel, but he's tricked into first marrying her sister, Leah. Jacob immediately loves Rachel, willingly extends his labours to marry her and favours the children that she bears. This immediate love of Rachel, for Rabbi Kook, represents our perception of the present without seeing the implications for the future.

God's plan for the Jewish People was not through Rachel, but rather Leah. Our priests and kings descend through two of Leah's children, Levi and Judah. Through Leah's legacy, we can look beyond the struggles of today and aspire toward a lofty future. But Rachel and Leah are both needed. The Jewish People would not be complete without both of them. Leah provides hope for the future, and Rachel gives us the strength and comfort to manage today. ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen, who is based in Toronto, directs Ask Big Questions Canada in partnership with Hillel.

Michal Shekel

Say it isn't so, Rachel! As Jacob and his family prepared to leave Laban's house and head back to Canaan, *Rachel stole her father's household idols* (Genesis 31:19).

Is Jacob's beloved a thief?

There are a number of viewpoints regarding her motivation. Midrash Bereshit Rabbah asserts that Rachel was only trying to keep her father from idol worship. Radak and other commentators attribute a divination aspect to the household gods. Some claim these figurines, called *teraphim*, were a protective charm. In all cases Rachel's motivation is to protect her family.

Biblical scholars raise another point. The Nuzi tablets from Mesopotamia show that possession of the household gods was related to inheritance. If so, Rachel has much in common with her bashert: Jacob stole the birthright, Rachel stole the inheritance; he tricked his father, she fooled hers.

Her trickery may have been a way to prove a point. When Laban came looking for the *teraphim*, Rachel was sitting on a cushion where she had hidden the idols, claiming, "I cannot rise before you, for the period of women is upon me." (Genesis 31:35) Through her words and actions, she is rejecting Laban's heritage – his household idols are no match for a woman sitting on a pillow.

There is something different about Rachel. The first description we have of her is not of physical traits but of her vocation: Rachel is a shepherdess. (Genesis 29:9) From protecting her flock, she grows into a woman protecting her family.

A final transformation of Rachel takes place in Midrash Eichah Rabbah. Pleading for the nation exiled due to idolatry, she takes God to task for being jealous of mere idols while she, a human, never succumbed to jealousy of her sister. Moved by Rachel's advocacy and example, God promises to restore the Jewish People to their homeland. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is the executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis and spiritual leader of Har Tikvah Congregation in Brampton, Ont.

Howard Morrison

On six occasions, the Hebrew word for place, "makom," appears in the opening narrative of Parshat Vayetzei. Jacob finds himself alone for the first time. "He [Jacob] came upon a certain place... Taking one of the stones of that place... and lay down in that place... Surely, the Lord is present in this place... How awesome is this place... He named that place Bethel."

The sixfold repetition of makom, place, suggests that there is deeper meaning to the word "makom." In the story of Jacob's dream, Jacob not only finds himself in a sacred physical place, but he is experiencing a place of spiritual transformation in his life.

On a universal level, there is no place void of God's presence. Thus, God revealed the Divine Self to Moses from a lowly bush. In the Shabbat morning *Kedushah*, God's glory fills the world.

On an existential level, the place of God's presence is found within every individual. It is no wonder that when we comfort mourners, we invoke the name HaMakom, the ever-present place, as a term for God's comforting presence.

On a theological level, a number of ancient commentaries have understood many of the Torah's references to makom as synonyms for Jerusalem.

I am writing this Dvar Torah at a time when Jerusalem has suffered many deaths and injuries as the result of cowardly acts of terrorism. It is true that God's presence is found in any place we find ourselves. At the same time, traditionally, we face the place known as Jerusalem when we recite core prayers of our liturgy.

May our brothers and sisters in Jerusalem find comfort during this challenging time. May the story of Jacob's place of transformation inspire a transformation in Israel from violence to peace and a spiritual transformation for all of us wherever we dwell. ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior rabbi – Mara D'Atra at Beth EmethBais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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SeeJN | Rivlin to Toronto FC?

London's flamboyant Mayor Boris Johnson, left, joined Israeli President Reuven Rivlin for a Jewish-Arab soccer match promoting coexistence in Jerusalem, as part of his tour of Israel to promote investment in London. The pair helped kick off the new soccer season for the Equalizer organization, which works with around 140 schools across Israel to build confidence and understanding between Jewish and Arab children. The president and mayor met with local children and joined in as they held an exhibition friendly match. There is no truth to the rumour that Toronto FC is looking to sign Rivlin as their new centreback.

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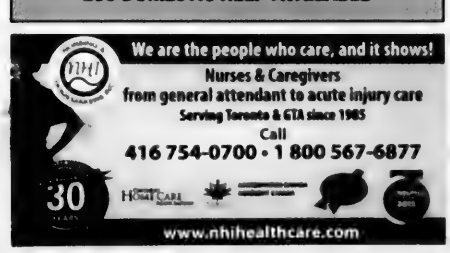
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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 19, 2015

Leon Wieseltier: Iran deal part of poor Mideast policy

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

For 30 years Leon Wieseltier served as literary editor of the *New Republic* magazine, presiding over a forum for book reviews and essays. Educated at Columbia, Oxford and Harvard universities, Wieseltier also attended Flatbush Yeshiva in Brooklyn. He is the author of *Kaddish*, based on the journal he kept after his father died in 1996. Wieseltier was in Montreal recently to address the Flegg Annual Lecture at McGill University on the topic, "A Passion for Waiting: The Strangely Unexcited Messianism of the Jews." He spoke via telephone to *The CJN*.

Let's talk about the topic of your presentation in Montreal. What do you mean by the strangely unexcited messianism of the Jews?
I mean that the history of messianism in Judaism is the history of false messianism, and I wanted to explain why the people who invented the idea of the Messiah never accepted one.

Why are there so many false messiahs and why have Jews not accepted any of them?
I think that in my interpretation of the sources the reluctance to accept a messiah was actually intrinsic to the Jewish idea of the Messiah itself. It wasn't just that the right guy didn't turn up. We're set up to protect the reality that exists. Even though it's imperfect, it's sufficient for some of our purposes.

Where did the idea of messianism come from in the first place?
The figure of the Messiah originates in the Bible, but then it's developed in various ways, first by the rabbis of the Talmud and then by the thinkers of the Middle Ages.

Is it relevant to us today? Are there many people in the Jewish community waiting for the perfect circumstances to bring the Messiah here?
I think it's relevant in three ways. One, I think it's just damn interesting. Two, I think it's relevant to peoples' expectations of history. The theory of the Messiah is really the theory of what to expect from history, how much to hope for, and how to hope, and this is especially important for people who find themselves in adversity and need hope for a change. It's a way of thinking about change in the world and the various types and degrees of changes. In that sense, it's always relevant.

And thirdly, there still appear Jews with strong messianic inclinations, who either believe that the Messiah has arrived, as some of the Chabad Chassidim did, or who believe that the Messiah is imminent, as certain forces on the West Bank and in Jerusalem believe.

You've written a lot about Iran and come down pretty strongly against the nuclear deal. Israel is against it. America's Sunni allies are against it. Many people see it as a bad deal. Why do you think the Obama administration was so dead set on negotiating it?
The administration thought it was not a bad deal. They thought it was the best deal they could get under the circumstances, and some of them thought it was actually a very good deal, including the president.

The president has a personal obsession about doing something about nuclear proliferation, and like many people who have that obsession, he looks at it outside its larger political and strategic context. So, for example, we are very proud that we confiscated all of [Syrian President Bashar] Assad's chemical weapons, which was a great triumph of arms control, except it has had no impact whatsoever on the war in Syria. None.

You have to look at arms control in various political and strategic and historical contexts, and they don't do that. The president believes there are certain countries in the world toward which the United States has a certain prior guilt. Two of those countries happen to be Cuba and Iran.

The president is obsessed with the fact that in the 1950s, the CIA overthrew the leader of Iran, and in the 1970s, we allied ourselves with the Shah, who had his notoriously cruel secret police. He is less concerned about the fact that the regime that he is now doing business with is worse than the regime we did business with earlier and that the democrats and dissidents in Iran look to him and the United States for support in resisting that regime.

Why do you think it's a bad deal?
I can see why people would think that if you buy 10 years of respite from their enrichment of uranium, you accomplished something. My own view is that you could have bought more and that the price we paid for what we did get was too high.

How is the Jewish community in the United States responding to that deal? Are they behind it?
It's accepting the verdict and attempting to move on. The Jewish community knows that America's relationship with Israel is one of the pillars of Israeli security, and I think that it's looking to the future.

They lost. It wasn't a catastrophic loss. I don't believe it will affect Israel's relationship with the United States. I don't think it was a catastrophic loss even for AIPAC. AIPAC lobbied for a certain cause. Sometimes lobbies win and sometimes lobbies lose, and you move on to the next fight.

Leon Wieseltier

In Canada over the last few elections the Jewish vote moved from the Liberals to the Conservatives, in part because of their policies on Israel. Is something similar happening in the United States?
The largest Jewish vote any Republican president ever got was Reagan, and I think it was 30 per cent or under. I think American Jews do not vote solely on Israel. I think on many of the domestic issues they care about, they're solidly liberal. I think on foreign policy questions, a large number of them are solidly pro-Israel.

On more general foreign policy questions – such as what our policy should be, should America intervene in certain places, should we cut or increase the defense budget – I think that the community probably is more with the president than against him.

On the broader U.S.-Israel relationship, it seems that under the previous two administrations, relations with Israel were better, but that changed under the Obama administration.

It's well known that defence co-operation has never been better. That's uncontroversial.

Obama in his very correct attempts to find some solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in his very correct opposition to the Israeli settlement of the West Bank, I think he was very heavy-handed in his approach and rather insulting to the Israelis in a whole variety of ways.

And I think [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu returned the favour by becoming insulting to Obama in a whole variety of ways. One has to separate the question of the Israeli-American relationship from the question of the Obama-Netanyahu relationship, which is poison.

But both countries are bigger than the people who lead them and longer-lasting, so I think it will be a good day for relations between the countries when the Netanyahu-Obama soap opera is finally over.

What about America's relations with its allies in the region. They turned on Mubarak in Egypt, they supported the Muslim Brotherhood against him. The Sunni regimes are angry over the Iran policy...
We have been totally inconsistent in the Middle East. We say Assad should go, and then we renege on our word to do something about it. We support the democratic rebellion in [Cairo's] Tahrir Square, but turn our backs on the dissidents in Tehran in 2009.

It's kind of a skill, but in the early years of the Obama administration, he found a way to alienate virtually every state in the region. Then along came the Iran talks and then the Iran deal, and if you take that, coupled with our continued stubborn and indefensible refusal to do anything consequential about the Syrian disaster, if you couple those things together, it looks like we're more tolerant of Shiite depradations than of Sunni depradations.

I think the president's foreign policy in the Middle East has been baffling to a great many people. He's disappointed many of our allies. He's been nasty to allies and friendly to enemies, and he sometimes acts as if our enemy, and I'm referring to Iran, may not be our enemy, which I think is ludicrous.

What he's left is a mess. His overriding concern is to leave office without us being militarily involved in a war in Iraq or Afghanistan. That really is an obsession. And he will try to arrange it so that will really be the case. But all that means is that as of inauguration day 2017, the next president is going to have to deal with a lot of issues that Obama just kicked down the road.

In Canada the niqab became an election issue, specifically whether women can wear it when taking the oath of citizenship. What's your view of that?
What's wrong with that? My own view is that that's entirely legitimate. I think it's a colossal mistake to approach a multicultural reality with anything but a multicultural spirit.

I think citizenship must never preclude difference. In fact, one should actually welcome difference, including its external manifestation.

From the standpoint of security and public identity, it's not too much to ask that a picture be taken for a driver's license.

I think if they wish to walk around with their faces covered, it's creepy in the extreme, and to people like ourselves it looks extremely dehumanizing... but it's not the role of the state to tell people how to practise their religion, unless the religion actually breaks the law. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Killing everything Joseph embodied in his Godly life

Backstory

EROL ARAF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

He loved Joseph.

No. I am not referring to Jacob, who adored his son Joseph, but to the Prophet Muhammad, who, when asked "Who is the most honourable amongst the people?" replied, "The most honourable among them is the one who is most Allah fearing." They said, "O Allah's prophet! We do not ask about this." He said , "Then the most honourable person is Joseph, Allah's prophet, the son of Allah's prophet, the son of Allah's Khalil."

This is related in *Sahih al-Bukhari: A Collection of Hadith*, compiled by Imam al-Bukhari, whose work is recognized by the overwhelming majority of the Muslim world to be most authentic reports of the *Sunnah* (teachings) of the Prophet Muhammad.

Those who tried to burn the Tomb of Joseph in October knew neither his song nor the abiding love and admiration their prophet had for the prodigal son of Jacob: the recipient of the coat of many colours.

The story of Joseph is woven to the rich spiritual, artistic and intellectual tapestry of all three Abrahamic faiths as it is related in religious texts, Islamic miniatures, illuminated manuscripts, in paintings to die for – who could not feel the oceans of sorrow that wash over the face of Jacob in Giovanni Andrea de Ferrari's or Rubens' masterpieces? – in novels such as Thomas Mann's *Joseph and His Brothers*, in musical works including Handel's majestic oratorio *Joseph and his Brethren*, in Richard Strauss' *The Legend of Joseph*, in musicals among which we might count Andrew Lloyd Weber's and Tim Rice's *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, in DreamWorks' animation film *Joseph: King of Dreams*, in Iranian Farajollah Salahshoor's film *Yousef e Payambar (Joseph the Prophet)*, and in Bernard Lang's book *Joseph in Egypt: A cultural Icon from Grotius to Goethe*.

In Islam, Joseph is so revered that although the stories of other prophets are mentioned in various passages, the complete narrative of Joseph is given in one section titled *Yusuf*, according it unprecedented honour. Ismail ibn Kathir, who was among the most influential Sunni scholars of the Shafi School, in his celebrated commentary states that touched by God, "Joseph was the greatest, the most noble and most exalted" among Jacob's sons.

But it is in Sufi mysticism that one finds the most profound rendition of the trials, tribulations and triumphs of Joseph, as Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi's perspective imparts the story with universal spiritual import transcending faith- specific interpretations. For it was Rumi who wrote:

" I am not from the East
or the West,
I am not Christian or Jew
or Muslim.
I am not Hindu, Buddhist,
Sufi, or Zen.
I do not belong to any
established religion
or any cultural system.
I am neither the body,
nor the soul,
for I belong to Divine Soul
of my Beloved."

Endowed with such universal values, Sufis have drawn from Joseph's story lessons of mystical, ethical and theological significance rooted in all consuming Divine Love. As such, Rumi saw the life of Joseph as a parable of God's way, a way which a mystic should focus his journey- following the way of love.

Rumi lamented that Joseph did not sleep at night for 10 consecutive years, pleading every single night with God on behalf of his brothers. Rumi has Joseph say, "O Lord, forgive my brothers, or I will fill the foundations of this palace with hundred more brotherly cries and tears of mine."

In Islam, there is no blasphemy, no sacrilege, no burning of the Tombs of Patriarchs, no murderous rage. Where are the voices of the faithful condemning the burning of Joseph's Tomb as an affront to the Prophet Muhammad? Is not this silence another way of killing everything Joseph embodied in his Godly life?

Thomas Mann in the *Prelude to Joseph and His Brothers*, entitled *Descent to Hell*, writes " Very deep is the well of the past. Should we not call it bottomless?" He might have added "So is the well of hatred!" For this is a bottomless well endlessly filled with tears and jealously guarded by silent ghosts. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

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Joseph Starr	Oct 24/15	221 Ava Road
Albert Yalowsky	Oct 26/15	484 Steeles Avenue, West
Erwin Greben	Oct 27/15	3800 Yonge Street
Belle Taft	Oct 27/15	147 Elder Street
Sofia Kroupnikov	Oct 29/15	15 Torresdale Avenue
Irving Ungerman	Oct 27/15	2600 Bathurst Street
Fela Leader	Oct 28/15	205 Cummer Avenue
Melissa Levin	Oct 27/15	98 Galley Avenue
Etty Strul	Oct 28/15	7 Townsgate Drive
Muriel Solomon	Oct 31/15	484 Steeles Avenue West
Sam Wishen	Oct 29/15	120 Promenade Circle
Ruth Anker	Oct 30/15	1131 Steeles Ave. West
Lev Barsky	Oct 30/15	6200 Bathurst Street
Paul Newman	Oct 30/15	8 Honeywell Place
Nettie Scheinert	Oct 29/15	100 Upper Madison Ave.
Gary Kohen	Nov 1/15	217 St. George Street
Sophie Stransman	Nov 2/15	19 Lower Village Gate
Catherine Samuel	Nov 1/15	429 Walmer Road
Helena Honey Shrott	Nov 3/15	2 Cheddington Place
Susan Morry	Nov 3/15	540 Russell Hill Road
Antonina Kroukova	Nov 5/15	5935 Bathurst Street
Ethel Epstein	Nov 4/15	4300 Bathurst Street
Dr. Margie Bleyer Lieber	Nov 4/15	9 Sirocco Drive
Vita Seidler	Nov 4/15	21 Mistflower Road
Gerry Waldston	Nov 5/15	321 Betty Ann Drive
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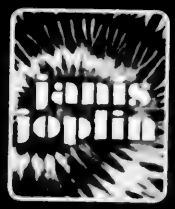

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Family traditions – the ties that bind

HEIDI ZACKON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

For Tevye, the iconic Papa in *Fiddler on the Roof*, tradition was all about the classic roles and expectations for each member of a family. Today, this definition has broadened, as traditions have become uniquely personalized to represent the many ways families come together in both daily life and times of celebration.

"My best memories of childhood are all about the things we did together as a family year after year," says Sharon Silver of Montreal. "Of course we had the traditions and rituals surrounding the various holidays, but often it was the little things we did on our own that I remember most fondly." Silver describes setting the holiday table with her brother by pretending they owned a hotel and were preparing for the fancy guests who would arrive. Or, how after a long Passover Seder, all the cousins would take turns sitting in their grandfather's big reclining chair and eating special candies out of a crystal dish.

For Silver, 49, everyday things were just as important as holiday rituals, as she reminisces about fresh bagels for Sunday morning brunch, the whole family squishing into the car bundled in ski clothes for a day up north or roasting marshmallows together after the weekly summer barbecue. "These memories are of the simplest things, but that is why I appreciate them," says Silver.

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Now as a parent herself, Silver recognizes how important these little rituals are in bringing her own family together in special ways. "When my son Michael was younger, we would have a scavenger hunt for his birthday. If he was turning eight, I would place eight little notes in different spots around the house and he would have to find them all throughout the day. It was something he would look forward to each year," says Silver.

Silver recalls how her older son Jason started a birthday tradition when he was six by sharing his favourite cake with his great-grandmother, as their birthdays were just days apart. Now, years later, Silver still bakes the same cake every birthday, making it both a celebration and a special way of remembering a cherished relative.

With her children older now and their lives becoming busier each year, Silver realizes the traditions create opportunities to come together and stay connected. This year for Chanukah, they made sure to get together each night even though their schedules had them running in different directions. Silver brought out the family menorah, hand painted by her son years ago, and they fell into the usual routine of each one alternating turns to light the candles. Afterward, everyone went off again, back to their own lives.

"My boys were the ones who asked what time we would be getting together each night, even without my reminding them. It was just as important to them now too," says Silver. "Even though our time together was short, the feeling of coming together is what mattered. That's what really lasts." ■

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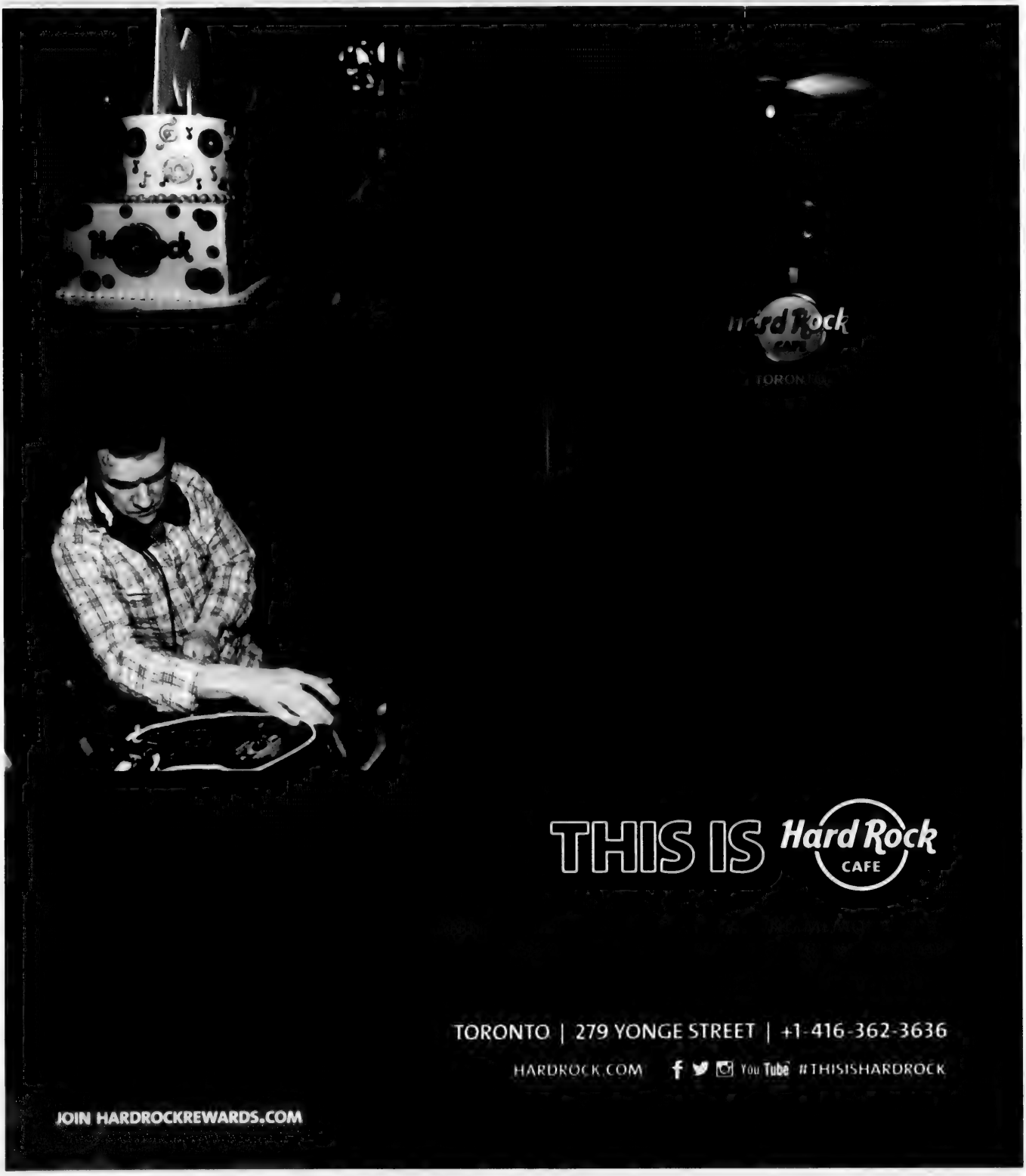
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Wedding speeches and toasts documented for posterity

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

Wedding and bar mitzvah toasts date back centuries and the toasting tradition is practiced throughout the world.

Today, however, no one has to dig through scrapbooks or albums to track down toasters' good will wishes.

Words and gestures are not only recorded and stored on video and websites but every move can be retrieved on tablets, laptops, smartphones, and personal computers.

Caroline Tiger author of *Wedding Speeches and Toasts and Other Words for Family and Friends*, notes the history of the term "toasts" stems from the early decanting process, whereby scorched toast was placed at the bottom of the wine bottle to absorb sediment.

Toasts usually begin after cocktails, once everybody has been seated for the meal. Speeches and toasts may be interspersed so that a few are reserved for the end of the dinner.

MCs should compare notes in advance to avoid repetition, as well as to confirm the order of speakers.

Groom toasts bride.

The parents of the bar/bat mitzvah child, or bride and groom, usually welcomes guests and thanks them for coming. Other family members or close friends follow. Every toast should end with compliments as well as l'chaim and best wishes.

Everyone appreciates a dash of humour, provided jokes and anecdotes are in good taste and refrain from embarrassing or hurting celebrants' feelings. Avoid private jokes or stories that allude to something familiar to only a select few. While some hosts hire a speechwriter or secure a friend's assistance, many people compose their own addresses.

When writing a speech or toast, start with a rough draft. Spill out what comes to mind and don't worry about grammar until the editing stage. Jog your memory with the following queries: How long have you known the bar/bar mitzvah or bride and groom? Do you have an inspirational or humorous story related to them? What are five words that come to mind when you think about them? Numerous proverbs and famous quotes are public domain, so take advantage of this source. These sayings may serve as an appropriate tie-in to the tribute itself.

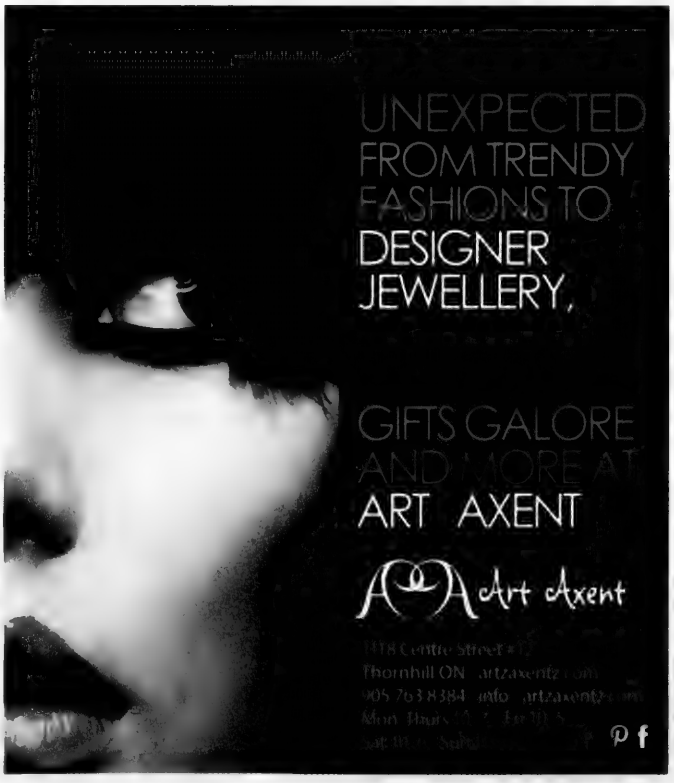
With regard to composing the text and presenting the two-minute speech and toast, Tiger offers numerous tips. Divide the toast into three parts: introduction, tribute and toast. As soon as you mount the podium take a deep breath, look around you, and make eye contact with the guests. Introduce yourself to the guests by announcing your full name, connection to the hosts and relate your tribute to the occasion. Speak slowly and distinctly. The day of the simchah, limit alcohol intake to remain alert and coherent. To conclude, raise a glass and propose a toast.

Speeches can be delivered without a text or read aloud from a printed sheet. If planning to read the speech, make sure the print is a decent point size and the type is double spaced. If you're not reading it, jot major points on an index card and memorize the first and last lines.

Anyone hesitant to give speech writing a try, should heed the advice of Angela Lansbury, author of *Wedding Speeches and Toasts (Family Matters)*. "Don't worry too much about giving a [great] speech," she said. "This is a happy occasion and people aren't going to mind."

Tiger offers similar advice. "Don't try to style yourself into a modern day Shakespeare, just be natural but respectful."

Nevertheless, speech writing shouldn't be left to the last minute, and remember the axiom "practise makes perfect." Prolific humourist Mark Twain once quipped, "It takes three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech."■



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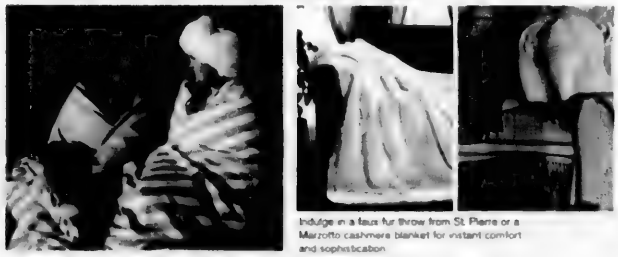

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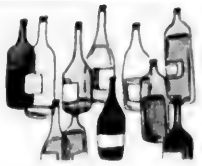
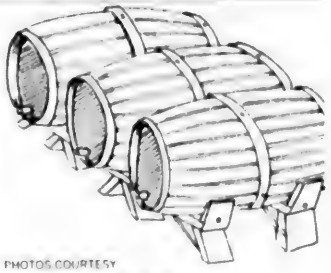
Wine how-tos boosts knowledge for novice and seasoned hosts





PHOTOS COURTESY OF RAINCOAST BOOKS IN CANADA

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

Wine is intertwined with many customs and rituals. Children observe their parents light the candles and chant blessings over challah and wine for Shabbat and holidays. Families and friends present toasts at ceremonies, celebrations and life cycle events.

Learning the types of wines, what to purchase, and how to store and serve, is just a sampling of topics readers will discover in Melanie Wagner's *Hello, Wine: the most Essential Things you Need to Know About Wine*. Distributed by Raincoast Books in Canada, the well bound little book is full of information. Lucy Engelman's colourful illustrations complement the text.

When a couple becomes engaged, their parents, relatives and friends host parties, and invariably they bring out the wine. Wine gurus as well as novices will benefit from Wagner's knowledge. An author/lecturer, Wagner is an accredited sommelier with a passion for her profession.

The author starts from scratch describing how to open a bottle and pop the cork. Subsequently, she elevates the reader's perception of viticulture with technical information. She addresses concerns readers may never have considered. The text is concise, well substantiated, and filled with memorable tips. Furthermore, after closing the book, readers are bound to feel more confident choosing, serving and drinking wine.

It pays to invest in good quality wine glasses, she explains. Aesthetics aside, studies on taste and scent from the Yale School of Medicine have proven that flavours perceived as more or less pleasurable are based on where wine lands in the mouth. The design and shape of stemware suited to specific wines serves that purpose.

Riedel, an established wine glass manufacturer, carries more than 250 types of wine glasses, many specific to certain grapes or regions. For wine with bubbles, Wagner uses a tall flute with a larger bowl than lip. Thin clear crystal tulip-shaped flutes work especially well. Tall flutes are not a necessity but Wagner shuns the shallow champagne coupe or saucer-shaped wine glass for sparkling wine.

According to Wagner, the best part of drinking sparkling wine is watching bubbles escape while savouring the aroma, but that occurs too quickly in a wide-brimmed champagne coupe. She also advocates hand washing glasses and letting them air dry.

Holding a glass by the stem prevents hands from marking or heating the bowl. Swirling the glass aerates contents adding oxygen to wine. Filling a glass to the brim defeats the purpose. It's preferable to stop halfway and once imbibed offer refills.

A moist cork is a tell-tale sign the wine bottle was correctly stored on its side but the scent is the absolute indicator.

ABT (acidity, body and tannin) are important elements associated with wine. Acidity is the pronounced tang running through the core of wine. Warm places create wines with lower acidity, whereas higher acidity is more prevalent in wines from cool regions like Germany. Higher acidity acts as a preservative adding to a wine's shelf life.

Body refers to the wine's weight or viscosity. The more alcohol, the more body Wagner explains. Light-bodied wine is like skim milk. Conversely, strong-bodied wine is like whole milk. Tannin, the component that dries the mouth, is the compound that comes from the skins and seeds of grapes. It may become apparent in wine that is stored too long in an oak barrel. Tannin is a natural preservative, found in Cabernet Sauvignon and Bordeaux wines.

Wine lists, language and phonetic pronunciation tips serve as a boon for readers ordering in restaurants or at a liquor store.

Wagner dispels wine myths, such as pink wine being passé, but doesn't dismiss some truthful elements in the mix. ■

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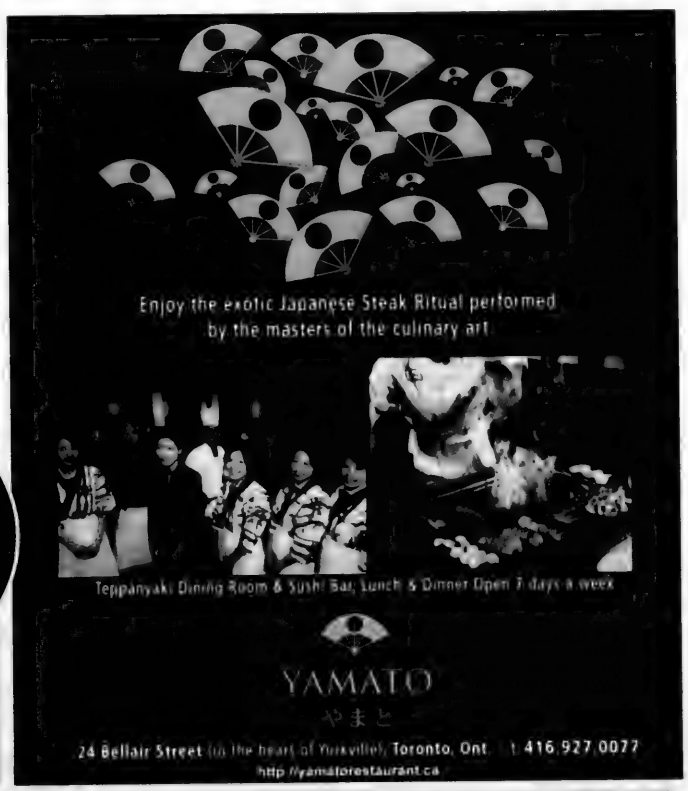
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Tightening the budget strings at your party

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It's easy to get carried away when you're planning a party. Pinterest is abuzz with tantalizing ideas for décor, and every host wants a great menu, a spectacular venue and a series of vendors that excel at what they do.

The budget can be a source of many problems, however, particularly when that vision is handicapped by financial constraints. So, how do you balance the budget and still have the party you want? Here are our top tips:

Time of year and time of day make a big difference to budget, party planners agree. Avoid nuptials on a Saturday night and opt for a party outside of the peak season – i.e. between the months of April and October.

Many start their party research by contacting a reception venue and receiving quotes on catering. The word "minimum spend" comes up often and can be misleading. Remember that the starting price represents the cheapest centrepieces and the least expensive item on the menu – a far cry from the most desirable or the one you want as host/hostess. To avoid confusion, ask potential venues about the average price per person instead.

Once your party budget is more clearly defined, it's time to discuss the feasible length of your guest list. If your party is going to include dresses, favours, hairdresser, makeup, cake, photography, videography, transportation and a myriad other details, here's a good formula for figuring out the financials. Multiply the number of people you intend hosting with the price of food and drink at your venue. If that number comprises 60 per cent of your budget, you're on track. The remaining 40 per cent will be absorbed by the rest.

If the numbers you calculate are unfeasible, well, start trimming. Fast. There are two ways to do this: take things you wanted out of the party or reduce the number of guests. But first, sit down and list the top three things that are most important to you at the party. Keep that list handy so you don't lose sight of it as you budget-crunch.

Consider reducing the time allotment for your party. Cutting it by a couple hours will reduce the costs associated with your music vendor, photographer, videographer, catering and reception venue

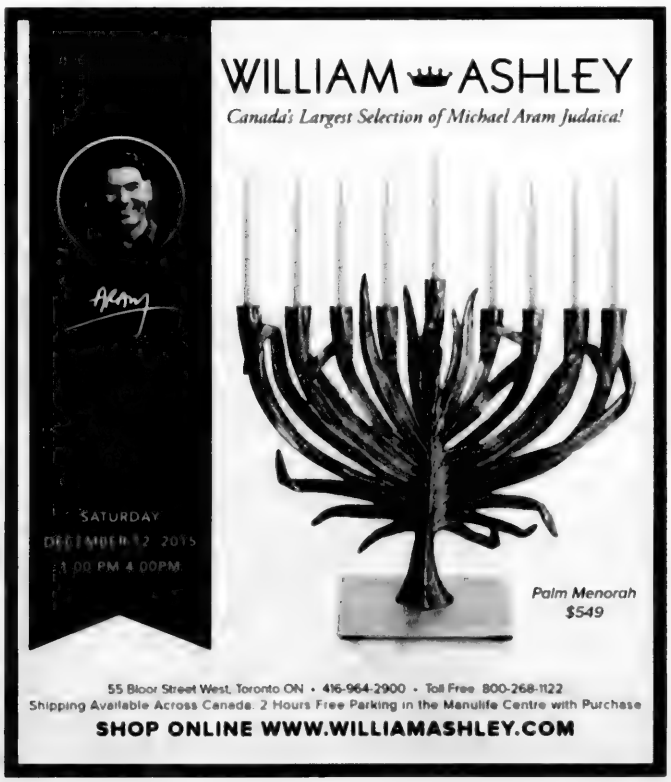
Host a breakfast or brunch reception instead of a dinner, which is considerably more expensive.

> *First, sit down and list the top three things that are most important to you at the party.*

Cake talk: instead of ordering a large, expensive cake, choose a smaller one for display and serve guests cake slices from a much cheaper (but no less delicious!) sheet cake stored in the kitchen

Printing costs for stationary can mount up quickly. Consider writing or designing your own table numbers, programs and menus. There are myriad innovative ways to communicate information to guests. Consider chalkboards, attractive mirrors or handwritten signs instead.

Party favours are extras that don't always justify their expense. If favours are a must at your party, give one per couple instead of one per person. And consider making them yourself instead of purchasing them. ■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How sweet it is – eye catching desserts

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

When a couple becomes engaged, or a boy or girl is called to the Torah as a bar/bat mitzvah, family and friends are eager to entertain them.

Brunches, luncheons, teas and dinner parties are among the popular gatherings. Dessert is always in order and stunning cakes and exquisite epicurean items make an impression.

The challenge lies in turning out picturesque desserts that taste scrumptious. While some dessert aficionados overlook calories, others shun refined sugar or prefer less per recipe.

Icebox Cakes by Jean Sagendorph and Jessie Sheehan and *Baking with Less Sugar* by Joanne Chang differ in focus but both books are chock full of luscious desserts. Distributed by Raincoast Books in Canada, these hard-covered books are beautifully illustrated and every detail of each recipe is explained. Furthermore, the authors offer tips, which novices and experienced bakers will appreciate.

Icebox Cakes lives up to its theme – recipes for the coolest cakes in town – and Tara Donne's vibrant photographs embellish every glossy page. Authors Sagendorph and Sheehan go for rich, creamy fillings. They devote separate sections to preparing layers, fillings and toppings that enable bakers to achieve excellent results. Among the components are wafers, puddings and fruit. Although ingredients differ according to recipe, the method is similar.

Decorating ideas add to the beauty of each presentation. A few of the many choices are Chocolate-Grand Marnier Cake, Black Forest, Key Lime Pie, Chai-Ginger Cake, Raspberry Ganache and White Chocolate Orange Cake.

The easiest recipe in the book is a proven favourite. The "old school" recipe yields nine to 12 servings and is composed of homemade or store bought chocolate wafers, vanilla whipped cream and chocolate shavings for decorating.

Baking with Less Sugar is geared to individuals interested in curbing consumption of refined sugar. Author Joanne Chang majored in mathematics at Harvard University but opted to forge her niche as an author, magazine contributor, pastry chef and co-owner of epicurean bakeries in Massachusetts.

> *The challenge lies in turning out picturesque desserts that taste scrumptious.*

Chang clearly states her profession is not medicine, therefore, *Baking with Less Sugar* isn't meant as a manual for people with diabetes or related conditions. Chang used honey, maple syrup, molasses, fresh fruit and juices to attain desired sweetness.

Anyone who is looking for a useful gift for newlyweds can be assured that *Baking with Less Sugar* will set them off on a healthier path, yet satisfy their yen for sweets. Furthermore, fledgling and culinary experts will discover helpful hints. Joseph De Leo's photographs are breathtaking.

The majority of luscious recipes in the first chapter contain one-half a cup of sugar or less with a few exceptions containing two-thirds of a cup. A gathering of well-honed home bakers were quick to compliment the blueberry bran muffins and vanilla pecan coffee cake. Of course, these are just two of more than 60 entries. Chapter 2 is devoted to chocolate lovers and one enticing pie is a truffle chocolate cream. ■

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Destination draw

MARILYN LAZAR
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Bar/bat mitzvah or wedding hosts are discovering the obvious allure to a destination simchah. However, there are also some pitfalls to consider in order to avoid disappointment and unpleasant surprises.

Especially with weddings, across the Caribbean, resorts promote "free weddings", but what does that really mean? Inclusions range from a reception with numbers tied to the number of guests who book rooms, to a honeymoon suite for the bride and groom. Not that a destination wedding connotes cheap by any stretch. In fact, celebrities have popularized the concept and lent it a certain cachet.

In metropolitan hubs, hosts are turning to interesting architectural structures for venues or even vacant warehouse spaces which they build up and decorate to the hilt. But if your ceremony is taking place on a beach at sunset, there's really little you need to add to the setting; the ambience is built right in. With stunning backdrops provided by Mother Nature, it's easy to make the most of your surroundings. Who needs a formal bouquet when you can use freshly cut blooms? No need for fancy lighting under palm trees and a canopy of stars.

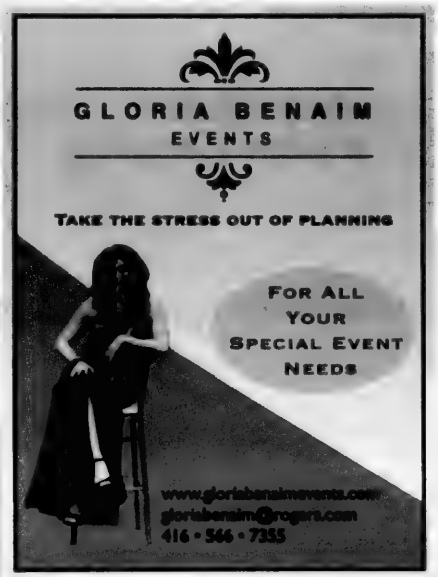
The question is one of style: Are you prepared to forego a limo in favour of a motorboat? Will you feel comfortable in a romantic sundress instead of a structured bridal gown, simple hoops instead of diamond chandeliers in your ears? Perhaps you actually prefer an untucked linen shirt and chinos over a tux. Simplify your wedding favours, too. Think local and pick up some rum, vanilla or a craft at the market.

The devil is in the details. Make sure not to limit your research and communication to the online experience. Arrive in time to see samples where possible. There are event planners that can be hired locally but that's probably unnecessary. Most resorts have an in-house coordinator who will be pleased to work with you. Make sure to clearly communicate your requirements and desires beforehand. The packages are self-explanatory.

Destination wedding does not necessarily mean a beach location. One couple I know returned to the ski resort mountaintop where they met. It can have special meaning for the bride and groom, be someplace they've always wanted to go, or simply work out as an enjoyable trip.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that the timing and price point of your choice may not suit everybody on your guest list. Before making your decision, make peace with the fact that you may receive some flak and some unexpected nos. How will you feel if a grandparent isn't strong enough to travel or your best friend can't get time off of work? That being said, modern technology – from teleconferencing to Skype - make it possible to include people in the ceremony who can't be there and let them listen to speeches in real time. You can also organize a small post-nup party back home and watch the movie.

Just make sure you're not harbouring a vision of a Vera Wang in a formal ballroom. Because if your silk shift is comfortable as you backbend in the limbo to a calypso beat, then you just may have your wedding cake and eat it too. ■



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Learn how to tie one on

MARILYN LAZAR

Be it a welcome rite of passage or a road he goes down kicking and screaming, there comes a time in a man's life when he must don a tie.

If you are more at home in your jeans than in a tuxedo, you're not alone. But whether you're taking the plunge for yourself, your partner or your family, here are some tips to help you do it with dignity rather than reluctance. So leave the Rambo-style handkerchief in the schoolyard and set an example for the next generation. Wear a tie.

There are several ways to knot a tie, each one exuding a different impression or style. These include the Pratt knot, the four-in-hand and the half-Windsor. Let's leave those for the occasions where you're rushing through your finishing touches in the elevator and concentrate on a proper Windsor knot.

The full Windsor knot originated with royalty and is definitely old school, reeking of confidence, power and respect. It's best suited to a tie of thin material, though it creates a presence with width and bulk.

What better time to learn to tie a classic Windsor knot? After all, you don't have to be a duke to look and feel regal.

Seven simple steps

• Always use a mirror. Turn up your collar and button the top button. Place the tie around your collar, seam inside.

• Start with the wide end of your necktie on the right, extending about 12 inches below the narrow end on the left. Then, cross the wide end over the narrow end.

• Bring the wide end up through the loop between collar and tie.

• Bring the wide end back down. Pull the wide end underneath the narrow end and to the right, back through the loop and to the right again so that the wide end is inside out.

• Bring the wide end across the front from right to left. Avoid using too many fingers. Three fingers will give you a wider knot, but two is best. (Obviously adjust to individual finger circumference.)

From left, Corbin Seligman, Aaron Crespin and Jason Attermann wearing ties at a wedding just outside London, England over Thanksgiving weekend.

• Pull the wide end back up through the loop again.

• Bring the wide end down through the knot in front. Use both hands to tighten the knot carefully and draw it up to the collar. The perfect length will fall about an inch above your belt.

Hint: Never leave your tie knotted when storing it – it will last longer and look better if you hang it loosely. There are special tie hangers to organize multiple ties, but any padded hanger surface will provide a loose drape. ■

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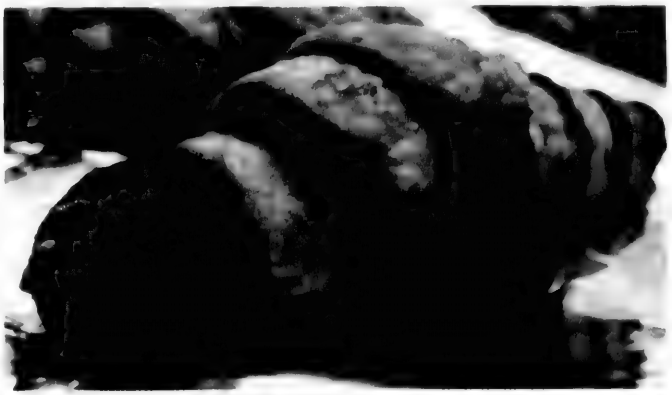
Does this beloved pastry need to be dairy to taste good?

ROBERT GLUCK
JNS.ORG



Rugelach (singular: rugala) are a beloved traditional Jewish pastry, with a quirky history to boot, but they often present a kosher conundrum. Though pareve rugelach are often a preferred dessert after a meat meal, some of today's most popular rugelach are known for their dairy fillings.

Pastry chef Paula Shoyer – author of the books *The Kosher Baker: Over 160 Dairy-free Recipes from Traditional to Trendy* and *The Holiday Kosher Baker: Traditional & Contemporary Holiday Desserts* – calls herself "a huge fan of rugelach," but says that over the years she has been "disappointed at the quality I find everywhere."

"Kosher bakeries sell versions that are dry and filled with over-processed fillings, giving the cookies a fake, too-sweet taste," Shoyer tells *JNS.org*. "As a result, I rarely buy them, or even eat them, at kosher events. The only rugelach I have enjoyed in years are from Zabar's in New York, and those are good because they are made with butter and have so much chazerei (Yiddish for junk) in the filling."

Shoyer, however, says she has perfected a pareve rugelach recipe made with soy cream cheese and pareve margarine. Like the Zabar's version, she loads them up with lots of fillings. She calls them "everything rugelach," and the recipe is included in *The Holiday Kosher Baker*.

"They are easy to prepare, have a flaky crust, and you can fill them with whatever you like," says Shoyer.

Where do rugelach come from, anyway?

According to Joan Nathan's *Jewish Holiday Cookbook*, traditional rugelach are made in the form of a crescent by rolling a triangle of dough around a filling. Some sources believe rugelach and the French croissant share a common Viennese ancestor – crescent-shaped pastries commemorating the lifting of the Turkish siege during the 1683 Battle of Vienna. But this might be an urban legend, as both rugelach and their supposed ancestor, the kipferl, pre-date the early modern era, while the modern-day croissant did not originate earlier than the 19th century. This leads many to argue that the croissant is simply a descendant of either rugelach or kipferl.

Food writer and caterer Vered Guttman says the origins of rugelach date back to the Hungarian kifli, Austrian kipfel, and Polish rogal.

"The crescent-shape filled pastry was originally made with yeast dough and filled with fruit jams, poppy seed paste or nuts," Guttman has written for the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*. "Today rugelach may be the most popular sweet pastry both in the American Jewish community and in Israel."

Shoyer, meanwhile, says rugelach "are an American adaptation" of Austria's kipfel.

"Early versions used a yeast dough, but a recipe for the cream cheese version, popular today, was first published in 1950," she tells *JNS.org*. "Today some are made into crescents, but many companies, including myself, like to bake the square ones which are faster to assemble and hold more filling inside. Over the years I have developed several recipes, including a rugelach dough that is chocolate, and I am currently working on a whole grain rugelach dough for *Joy of Kosher* magazine."

Jane Moritz, owner of the Challah Connection vendor, has specialized in Jewish and kosher gifts since 2002. Her rugelach were voted "best mail order dessert" by David Rosengarten, an American chef, author, and television personality who hosted more than 2,500 television shows on the Food Network from 1994-2001. Moritz's rugelach were also featured on Epicurious.com as one of food blogger Sarah Kagan's suggested *Eight Delicious Hanukkah Gifts*.

Challah Connection assists customers with holiday shopping, sending gifts for occasions ranging from a housewarming to a shivah, or simply gathering around the table with loved ones. The company, says Moritz, "takes the symbolic foods of the Jewish holidays and creates gifts, and people love our kosher bakery items no matter what the season. We can't sell enough babka, challah, and rugelach."

"Our rugelach really are delicious," Moritz tells *JNS.org*. "They're dairy-based rugelach. They've got butter and cream cheese, which is great, although some people like to have pareve rugelach so they can have them after a meat meal."

Moritz says regarding her website's sales, "Babka may be taking the lead over rugelach, but we sell a lot of rugelach."

The aforementioned Zabar's rugelach are touted by the company's website as the favorite rugelach of New Yorkers.

"When you catch the warm aroma of our rugelach," the website states, "you'll immediately know why New Yorkers think ours [are] the best. Zabar's rugelach would make Grandma proud: made by hand, flaky, rich, sweet, fragrant, and stuffed with raisins or chocolate. Each order contains a full pound of our famous rugelach, in your choice of chocolate or raisin."

The Zabar's rugelach are made from cream cheese, butter, cinnamon, chocolate, raisins, and more.

"It's an old family recipe," Scott Goldshine, a store manager for Zabar's in New York City, tells *JNS.org*. "Our store is highly regarded because, like our founders, we are very much sticklers for quality."

Goldshine says Zabar's emphasizes the principles of "quality control at all levels, constant tasting, constant sourcing of the best products available, rejecting things we don't think are up to our standards."

"Everybody's grandmother has a recipe for rugelach," he says. "People make rugelach in different shapes and sizes and flavours. It's morphed into many flavours. We carry 10. We do a very large business in rugelach. I can make a living selling just rugelach." ■

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Savvy planners study schedules before setting simchah date

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

At first glance, setting a simchah date seems simple but celebrants are advised to do their homework to avoid disappointment. Besides studying Jewish and secular calendars, wise planners run the date by family, close friends and clergy before banking on their presence.

Career commitments, university examination deadlines, pre-arranged surgery, tax time for accountants, busy seasons for retail merchants, pre-scheduled business trips are all bound to have an impact on the final decision.

Furthermore, some couples are so set on a certain venue or vendor that they defer the date until learning the respective place or party is available.

Bar mitzvah dates depend on the Jewish calendar as well as the date of the child's birthday. Since both sides of the family are involved in planning a wedding, the consultation process is more intense.

In most instances, the celebrants' circle of family and friends includes a number of out-of-towners. Therefore, it pays to flip through the calendar to figure out which national and/or international holiday weekends would work out well. The invitation may serve as an incentive for out-of-towners to extend a long holiday weekend or plan a mini-family vacation around the date of a function.

Another factor to keep in mind is the change of clocks: Remember to spring forward one hour in the spring, and fall back one hour in the fall. It's a good idea to email reminders.

Rosh Chodesh, the beginning of a Jewish month is an auspicious date for a couple to begin their married life together. Weddings are not held during Shabbat but ceremonies can be performed after the conclusion of Shabbat at nightfall. ■

For more information, visit www.chabad.org

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Asian-themed bridal shower a sure hit

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

My mother, Joyce, and my sister-in-law, Jo Ann, were the official hosts for my daughter Carly's Asian-themed bridal shower. I was appointed the official caterer. Carly spent three consecutive summers teaching English in different areas of Asia and loved every minute. We wanted to bring back some of her warm memories from that time.

At our first meeting the three of us discussed and planned the menu. Carly is a vegetarian, so we went with Asian dishes that are amazing without any meat. We assigned ourselves chores, including sourcing out party products, specialty bakeries and Asian decorations.

First we checked out bridal shower and Asian party ideas using the Internet on sites like Pinterest. Then we visited party stores to check out items including decorations, paper dishes, napkins, and plastic cups, tasting or dumpling spoons, chop sticks, Chinese food boxes and plastic tableware. We made notes and took photos on our phones in order to compare. We visited several Asian supermarkets to see what they had to offer. There we found quite a variety of chop sticks at very reasonable prices. We picked beautiful patterned chopsticks for the meal along with a bulk package of plain chopsticks for my surprise dessert. Next we took a trip to Toronto's Chinatown.

We had a great time visiting all the stores on Spadina Avenue and along Dundas Street. In a huge Asian restaurant and kitchen supply store we found bulk Chinese food boxes, the ones that are square and have a wire handle. I needed these for my surprise dessert.

We bought a sleeve of 100 boxes for less then what 30 boxes would have cost at the party store. In some of the other smaller shops we found wall decorations, mini-cherry blossom trees that light up, charming paper umbrellas, colourful paper fans, bright Chinese lanterns all with co-ordinating Asian colours and designs, and Chinese silk-patterned fortune cookies.

We dropped all of it into the car and resumed our shopping search. We were hoping to find our party favours, and we were victorious. We found adorable Asian silk change purses. We also found attractive patterned plastic gift bags to wrap the favours in. I designed the shower invitations on the computer with a little help from my tech genius cousin, Kyle.

The front of the invitations boasted a Chinese lantern with delicate butterflies. On Pinterest we found several photos of cakes decorated to look like sushi platters, done with fondant.

None of us had the time to create such a masterpiece, so that was sourced out to a baker of wedding and other fancy cakes. I did my grocery order three days ahead of the shower and all the prep work two days before. I needed a minivan load of fruits and vegetables, fresh breads, Asian ingredients, sauces, spices, noodles, and wontons, veggie ground round, pop and Oriental rice cracker and nut mix. Next we visited the LCBO for some wine.

At home I started off by baking cupcakes, (banana/chocolate), almond cookies and Carly's favourite coconut cheesecake. I developed the recipe for this cheesecake for Carly on her 19th birthday, when she became of legal drinking age, as it contains a fair amount of Malibu Rum.

Next I began washing vegetables and doing all the chopping and dicing that could be done in advance, cooked whatever needed cooking, made the dips and sauces, and prepared the dumpling filling. Jo Ann was also busy at her house, baking her specialty cake balls decorated with edible handmade cherry blossoms. As well, she made amazing homemade fortune cookies that she stuffed with fortunes and then decorated with either a tuxedo or a bridal veil made of icing.

The day before the event we all got together in my kitchen, along with several other helpers, and started to assemble all five of the salads: Cherry Coleslaw, Asian Noodle Salad, Thai Cucumber Salad and Thai Crunch Salad. Next we assembled the cold Thai vegetarian spring rolls, the dumplings, and the cucumber fan sandwiches. The dumplings were the only dish that needed to be cooked after assembly, but we planned to serve them cold on the tasting spoons.

Lastly we assembled the surprise dessert, Fried Rice Cupcakes. The prepared cupcakes were iced with French vanilla icing and then dipped into toasted Rice Krispies cereal. Then they were sprinkled with candies that look like peas and carrots. The candies are often available at specialty candy stores, but orange and green Skittles will substitute nicely.

The cupcakes were placed over a marshmallow in each Chinese food box. This was to raise the cupcake up to be visible in the Chinese food boxes. They were then "garnished" with a "Carly's Shower" sticker and a pair of chopsticks. All that was left to be done the morning of was to set up the room with the decorations and tableware.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Jo Ann's centrepieces were topiaries made out of tiny paper umbrellas. We assembled the fruit platters, plated the food, uncorked the wine and prepared to enjoy.

CHINESE FRIED RICE CUPCAKES

Preheat oven to 350.

Gather all the items needed to bake and decorate the cupcakes. Prepare following ingredients to make two separate batches of batter.

Prepare cupcake tins with approximately 2-4 dozen cupcake paper cups. The amount of batter made may depend on the size of the bananas.

First batch

- 3/4 cup canola oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla
- 4 large ripe to overripe bananas, peeled
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- pinch of salt
- 3/4 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

In food processor, with feed tube removed, combine oil, sugar, eggs and vanilla. Replace feed tube and add in bananas and run processor until smooth. Add in dry ingredients and pulse until combined. Add in chocolate chips and pulse until chips are combined and some are actually chopped up. Scoop about 1/4 cup of the batter into each cupcake cup.

Second batch

- 3/4 cup canola oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla
- 4 large ripe to overripe bananas, peeled
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- pinch of salt
- 3/4 cup Nutella

Prepare batter exactly the same as above, but at the end combine in the Nutella until batter is chocolate coloured.

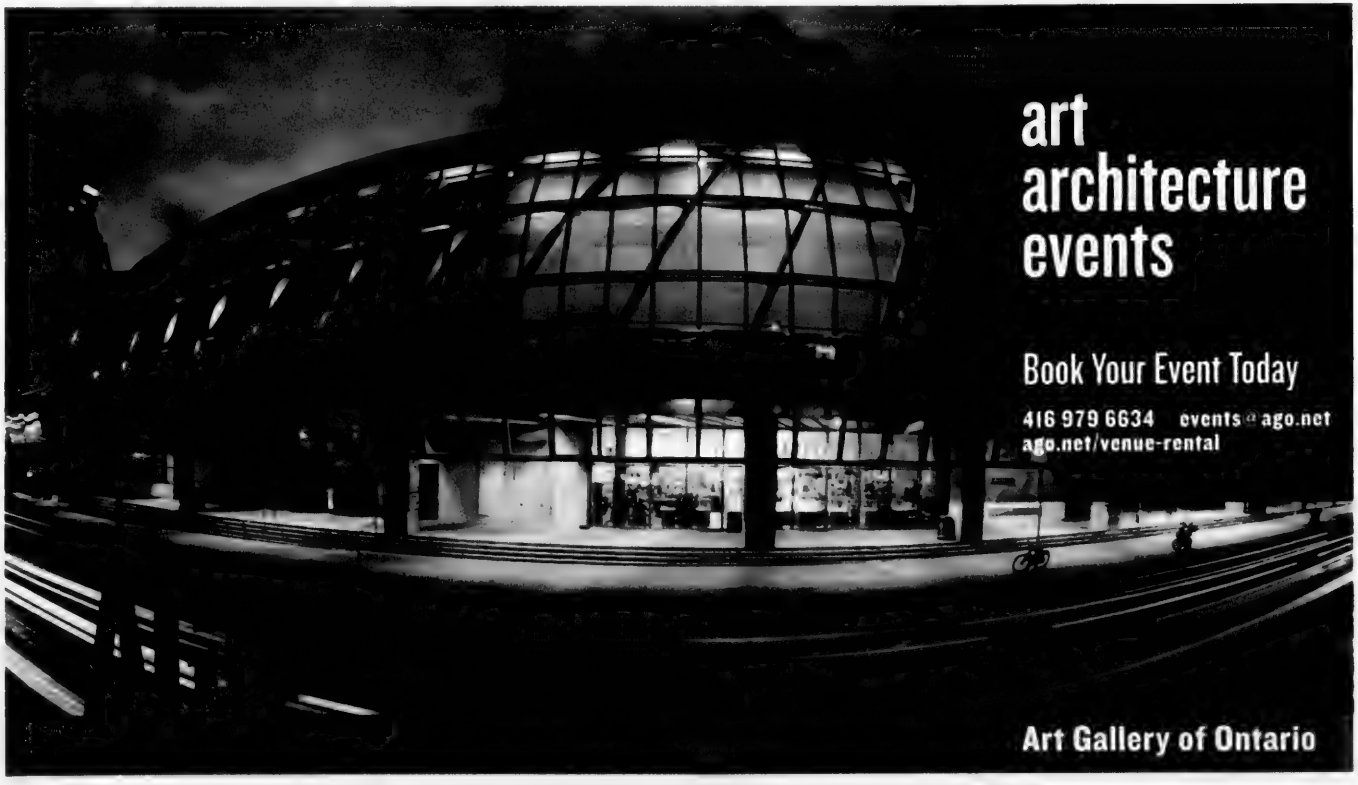
Scoop about 1/4 cup of the second batter over each cupcake cup. Using a knife, gently draw lines in the batter in different directions in each cupcake. This will "marbleize" the batter. Bake in preheated oven for about 25 minutes or until cake tester (toothpick) comes out clean.

Decorating the cupcakes

- 1 can of vanilla frosting
- 2-3 cups Rice Krispies
- orange and green candies, i.e.: "peas and carrots" found at specialty candy stores, Skittles, Smarties or M&M's.
- large marshmallows
- square Chinese food take-out boxes

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and cover with the Rice Krispies.

Bake in a 350 oven for 3-10 minutes watching them until they become a golden brown colour. Cool. Frost the cupcakes with a thin layer of frosting then press the iced cupcake into the Rice Krispies. Press on a few of the green and orange candies. Place a marshmallow in each box, then place a cupcake over it so that you can now see the top of the cupcake. Insert a pair of chopsticks into the right side of each box. ■



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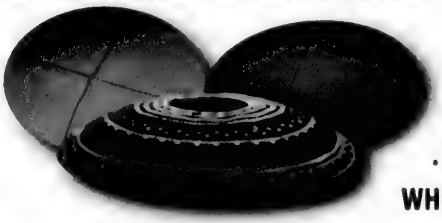

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Inside

Are Syrian and wartime Jewish refugees similar?

Voices on both sides of the resettlement debate make their case. **PAGE 12**

Former CHAT teacher murdered in West Bank

Rabbi Ya'acov Don had a unique ability to connect with young people. **PAGE 26**

COMMENT PAGE 6

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:19 p.m.	5:25 p.m.
Montreal	3:56 p.m.	5:03 p.m.
Ottawa	4:05 p.m.	5:12 p.m.
Toronto	4:25 p.m.	5:31 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:14 p.m.	5:27 p.m.
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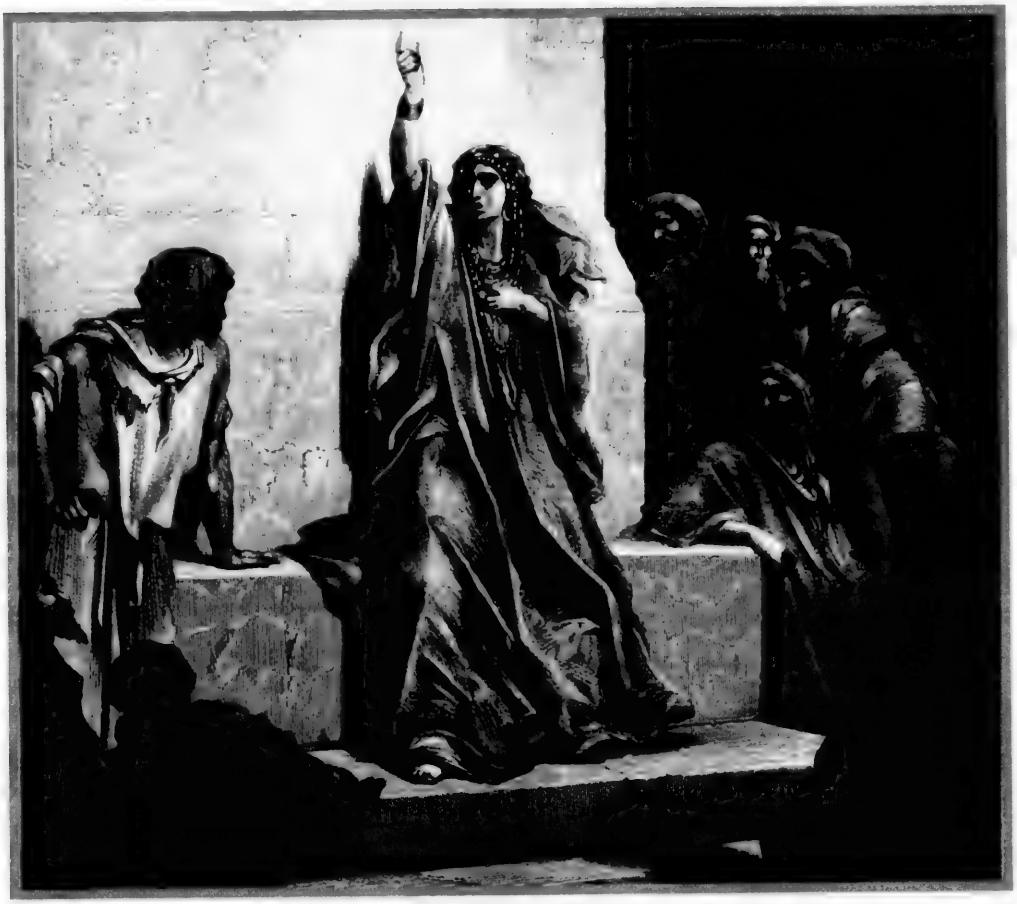

Orthodoxy and female rabbis

Women are entering the rabbinate because of their commitment to tradition – and because they believe that young people need role models they can relate to, Rabbi Lila Kagedan writes. **PAGE 8**

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A chassidic revelation, and a kosher grape juice juggernaut?

Welch's teams with Manischewitz

With sales flat for its non-kosher product, Welch's, the largest U.S. grape juice brand, is targeting kosher consumers by co-branding a new kosher offering with Manischewitz, the venerable Jewish food maker known for kiddush wine and matzah. Starting in 2016, the two brands will sell pure grape juice, certified kosher by the Orthodox Union, with bottles featuring both company's logos. Manischewitz matzah boxes will also advertise the juice. Welch's abandoned a kosher version a few years ago amid low sales.

Baal Shem Tov descendant comes out

A 24-year-old descendant of the Baal Shem Tov, the 18th-century founder of chassidic Judaism, has come out as transgender. Raised haredi in Brooklyn, N.Y., Abby – originally Srully – Stein revealed to the *New York Post* and announced on a personal blog that she recently began transitioning to become a woman. Stein is the grandchild of Rabbi Mordechai Stein, a prominent Skver rabbi. She said being a member of a famous chassidic family made her struggle more challenging. She also said her father hasn't spoken to her since she shared the news. She thinks he's in shock and "doesn't know what to do." Stein married a woman and had a son before divorcing and leaving Chassidism four years ago. She's now a student at Columbia University and is involved in campus Jewish life and a transgender support group.

Abby Stein FACEBOOK PHOTO

Dutch dorm room gets Nazi makeover

Senior students at Leiden University in the Netherlands redesigned the dorm room of a Jewish freshman with motifs from a Nazi death camp as an initiation prank. The incident, reported Nov. 13, involved members of the prestigious Minerva Society, the country's oldest student group. Mass graves were painted on the floor, barbed wire hung on pipes and the German words "*Arbeit macht frei*" – meaning "work makes you free," the slogan the Nazis hung on death and concentration camps – was spray-painted on the walls. Minerva said the act wasn't a sanctioned activity, while the school is considering disciplinary action, including expulsion. ■

Gematria

4 years

The sentence given to Moshe Goldstein, 32, of Brooklyn, N.Y., on Nov. 16 for trying to violently coerce a man to give his wife a religious divorce in 2011.

32%

An analysis by consumer service website Thumbtack found that U.S. DJs charge 32 per cent more on average for bar and bat mitzvah parties than for other events.

Quotable

We believe that science and technology is our common language.

— Maya Halevy, director of the Bloomfield Science Museum Jerusalem. **See p. 46.**

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz highlights eight songs for eight nights of Chanukah.

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTO – DRAWING OF DEBORAH BY GUSTAVE DORE SHUTTERSTOCK

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Letters to the Editor

Excluded by rabbinic vote

"Wait, you're actually interested in Jewish things outside of school?"

This is a real question I have been asked as a high school senior by other students. I am the weird one who actually enjoys being immersed in a tradition that is thousands of years old, that connects me to my family, my people, my God.

It was nice to know that at least when I was older, when I would be a maharat (Orthodox woman ritual leader), that I would be able to be a part of a community that would welcome anyone with open arms who decided to devote herself to a life of Torah and fear of God, no matter what title she may choose for herself.

Because of the new Rabbinical Conference of America statement, I can't have that hope anymore. I will always be an outsider in my personal pursuit of Torah and God, just because of my gender.

Sofia Freudenstein
Toronto

'We refuse to be enemies'

We live in a world which is unrecognizable from pre-9/11 times. Extremists of all shades find emotional justification and distort people's commitment to faith, democracy and civilization to carry out mayhem in the name of what they regard as sacred and the great majority finds abhorrent.

The latest monstrosity in Paris must be condemned forcefully, but not be allowed to justify a backlash against victims of violence escaping bloodshed and trying to reach Europe and Canada. Our government should not be discouraged. As Canadians, we need to continue our humanitarian work with a balanced approach that will keep Canadians safe.

We must find a way to address the conflicts of the 21st century with contemporary understanding. Otherwise, the declarations of war and revenge will only bring more hate, more killing, more war and the vicious circle will continue until we destroy our sense of personal security and our humanity with it.

There are no adequate words to express the outrage over the killing of innocent people anywhere. But our outrage must not be selective. No one should feel they can justify taking innocent lives be it in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Israel, Palestine, Sinai, Africa, New York or Paris. As Jews and Muslims we have seen both state and non-state terror and are committed to continue our joint efforts to ensure that "Never Again" is a promise kept.

Jointly, in keeping with our group's theme this year of twinning of mosques and synagogues, we refuse to be enemies and will not play into the hands of those who would goad us into violence and the quicksand of mutual destruction.

As Jews and Muslims, we call for healing and justice for victims of intolerance everywhere.

Shahid Akhtar and Barbara Landau
Co-chairs Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims
Toronto

Early warnings about Dion

Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion and the Liberals are already showing their true colours ("New foreign minister has mixed record on Mideast," Nov. 12.)

Firstly, they are pre-judging Israel as guilty for any future matters that may arise, clearly stating it will be judged differently and their tone concerning it will change. How can they do such a thing before events and circumstances even occur?

Secondly, they attack former prime minister Stephen Harper for his uneven defence of Israel, when all Harper ever did was to stand up to tyrants and clearly state that Israel has a right to defend itself. If these stands are offensive to the Liberals, perhaps we have to fear that we trusted them to speak on our behalf.

Joseph Hendel
Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Que.

Question of the week

Will the Paris attacks change attitudes in Europe toward Israel's security situation?

Let us know in 150 words or less at cjninfo@gmail.com

Letters to the editor are welcome in English or French. All letters must bear the sender's name, address and telephone number. We reserve the right to edit and condense letters.

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RABBI·2·RABBI

The meaning of redemption

Jews are a people wedded to hope, and as messy and awful as the world can be, our tradition tells us that our efforts can still make it whole

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Splansky: With so much to fear in the world today, it is hard to be hopeful. And yet, a central theme of our daily prayers is redemption.

We praise God for the precedent set by our redemption from Egypt. We pray that God will speedily redeem the People of Israel today. And we conclude each service with the hope that all the world will be redeemed, made whole.

Judaism is a messianic religion. And Jews are a people wedded to hope. True, we express it differently – some believe God will send Mashiach ben David to redeem us tomorrow, while others believe secular labour movements, human rights watches and environmental activism are the sources of redemption.

Rabbi Yehudah Tzvi Hirsch of Stretyn taught: "Each Jew has within the self an element of the Mashiach, and is required to purify and assist it to mature. Redemption will come when all Israel have brought this messianic spark to perfection within."

Ultimately, it is a burden and a privilege to carry the weight of this process of redemption.

Rabbi Fishman: One of my favourite books on Jewish responsibility has a wonderfully provocative title: *There Is No Messiah… And You're It.* The author, Rabbi Robert Levine, traces the idea of the Messiah in Judaism and concludes that each of us is an agent for bringing the world to its completion.

There can be no more optimistic belief. But how that process develops is not so simple.

One strain within our tradition believes that everything will be done for us – not only will peace, harmony and the brotherhood of man be gifted to the world, but the Third Temple will fall from the sky and land perfectly on the site of the Temple Mount.

By contrast, Maimonides, always the great rationalist, believed mankind will be the focus of the rebuilding. This more collaborative effort speaks to me much more. God is less interested in miracles and more focused on human accomplishment. Truly, the future is in our hands.

Rabbi Splansky: The Jerusalem Talmud's tractate on prayer begins with the following exchange: at dawn, Rabbi Chiya and Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta were walking in the valley beneath the Arbel Mountain by the Sea of Galilee. They saw the morning star's light break through. "That," said Rabbi Chiyah, "is like the process of redemption. First it emerges a little at a time, and the more it continues, the greater the light increases."

I've climbed Mount Arbel. From its peak at daylight, the valley beneath seems to go on forever, the farms below make a lit up patchwork of green and gold, and the Kineret beyond is bright blue. But these two Sages walked in the valley before dawn – to them, Arbel must have looked imposing and bleak, casting a deep shadow on top of the darkness. Yet, they had the faith to trust that the sun would rise and the courage to draw out the metaphor.

God's creation is sometimes predictably miraculous, other times surprisingly disastrous. Similarly, the human process of redeeming the world is sometimes predictable and sometimes surprising. The primary role of the Jew is, like those two rabbis, to always be on the lookout and never to despair.

Rabbi Fishman: Never despair, indeed.

In the song we like to teach our children, we sing that the whole world is a very narrow bridge, where the main aspect is not to be afraid. When Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav taught this idea, he touched upon one of the greatest truths in human psychology – that we all have a tendency to be afraid.

The greater the stakes, the greater the possibility for fear. And so when we look out at our world today it is understandable that getting on a plane can induce a moment of panic, and travelling by bus or even walking the streets of Israel can scare some. Add to that ever-growing list attending a concert or going out for a drink in Paris.

But as messy and awful as the world becomes, let us never be afraid to live and celebrate life. After all, our tradition reassures us that through our efforts a redeemed world can be achieved. ■

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Vol. XLV, No. 46 (2,222)*

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Sales, National & Toronto Local: Canadian Primedia, 416-922-3605

Israeli Advertising Representative:
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Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation:
July 14, 2015

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From the Archives | Chanukah concert

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A concert ticket for Great Hanukah Festival arranged by Cantor B. Wladowsky at Massey Hall, 1912.

SeeJN | Beach life

ESTHER RUBYAN/FLASH90 PHOTO

A woman and her dog enjoy some mild weather and relax on the rocky shore in Tel Aviv on Nov. 18.

From Yoni's Desk

What we learned from Rabbi Ya'acov Don

Every terror attack on Israelis is a tragedy, but some attacks are pure nightmares. Last Thursday's strike near the West Bank settlement of Alon Shvut, which left three dead, including an 18-year old yeshiva student from Boston, falls into the latter category.

For many Canadian Jews, there was a personal connection to this attack. Rabbi Ya'acov Don, who spent four years in Toronto in the late-1990s working as a shaliach (emissary), was among the victims. (A Palestinian man was the third person killed.) As the news began to spread, Rabbi Don's former students at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto (TanenbaumCHAT) and in the Bnei Akiva youth movement took to Facebook to eulogize their former teacher. They remembered him as charismatic, down-to-earth and optimistic, an educator who left his mark. Having spent some time with Rabbi Don during his Toronto sojourn, I completely agree.

The day after the attack, *The CJN* received a letter from Tomer Chervinsky, a TanenbaumCHAT graduate of 2001, titled "What I learned from Rabbi Don."

"During my four years at CHAT, no one teacher touched my life as much as Rabbi Ya'acov Don," Tomer began.

"He was a shaliach, from a West Bank community… I was a know-it-all secular lefty who challenged every one of the religious precepts he taught, and yet, he taught me more than any other teacher I've ever had.

"Ask anyone who knew Rav Don, and they'll remember his infectious grin, his ready smile, his quick wit and his passion for education. He pushed us to try harder, learn more, revel in knowledge and debate, and build communities of friendship and respect. He worked hard to ensure every voice was heard – even when he disagreed. He was the model of brilliance, compassion, supportiveness and humour that define the word mensch."

Tomer continued: "In Grade 12, a friend and I were running a Yom Hazikaron/Yom Ha'atzmaut ceremony, when alcohol from the memorial flame spilled and lit the gym on fire. Cue the extinguishers, the evacuation and my nervous breakdown… Rav Don was our staff advisor on the project – and when we wanted to cancel a second ceremony, this is what he told me: 'I understand you're stressed and embarrassed. If you don't respect the amazing work you put into this ceremony, that's fine, but I do, and I won't let you throw it away.' To this day, those words remind me that it's not how far you fall, it's how you stand back up.

"What Rav Don taught those of us who were lucky enough to know him was that we could passionately disagree – in that way that Israelis do – but still love each other. That we could debate ideas with a smile and a kindness that today's world is missing."

"I know all of us who knew the Don family while they were in Canada are saddened, and our hearts are with his wife, four children and [their] entire community. May they find comfort among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem."

Tomer, and so many others who were positively influenced by the mustachioed, baritone-voiced shaliach, are part of Rabbi Don's legacy. May his name continue to be a blessing for us all. ■ — YONI

EXCERPT

The last trip to Auschwitz

Steve Paikin

What compels someone to return to the site of one of the most monstrous evils the world has ever known? What provokes someone to walk, once again, under that gate that offered the promise of freedom, if only you worked hard enough (*Arbeit Macht Frei*), but which actually led to an inferno built specifically to obliterate your family, your friends, and your neighbours?

In the fall of 2014, Mordechai Ronen would have to face those questions one last time. The government of Poland had decided to sponsor what would likely be the last ever gathering of Auschwitz survivors, on the grounds of that former killing factory. The occasion was the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, which would take place on Jan. 27, 2015. Ten years earlier, at the 60th anniversary ceremony, more than a thousand survivors were invited to attend. This time, organizers were expecting a fifth of that number to show up.

Mordechai decided to return to that place, along with his wife Ilana, his son Moshe, and his granddaughter Sari. In addition, I was humbled and honoured that the Ronen family wanted me to accompany them on the trip as well.

The morning after we arrived in Poland, Mordechai was his usual upbeat self over breakfast. He'd tell a joke, or tease Moshe about what he was eating. He didn't betray a single hint of the pain that would emerge later that day. Even during the 75-minute bus trip to Auschwitz, Mordechai's compartmentalization continued.

But when we arrived in the town of Oswiecim, near the confluence of the Vistula and Sola rivers, suddenly Mordechai got very quiet. The smile disappeared.

We entered what is now (in Polish) called the Auschwitz-Birkenau Muzeum. There is about a five-minute walk from the entrance to the notorious Auschwitz gate, and throughout the course of that walk, one could see Mordechai begin to tense up. Suddenly, this man who was marching swiftly through airports began to walk slowly, at one point, even limping, taking the arm of his wife or granddaughter for support. His face was transformed. He began to cry.

Mordechai would be one of about 15 Auschwitz survivors to gather at the *Arbeit Macht Frei* gates. Waiting for him and the other survivors was Ronald S. Lauder, head of the World Jewish Congress. "Welcome," Lauder says to him. Mordechai reached out and hugged him. The tears continued. There were perhaps twice as many journalists there as survivors, and I saw in them something I've almost never seen in more than three decades of covering public events: I saw respect. I saw tenderness. I saw cameramen and reporters accustomed to banging into each other and shouting out their questions to "get the story" showing these survivors a kind of deference they normally never demonstrate. You might not think that's worth noting. But in this day and age, it's an incredible rarity.

"What are you thinking as you stand here," a reporter gently asked Mordechai.

"Horrible place," Mordechai replied, as Lauder puts his arm around him. "Things happened here that we can never let happen again."

"Abba...Ima...." Mordechai cries out, using the Hebrew words for "father" and "mother." Sari is holding his arm, trying to give him strength, rubbing his back, and trying to keep Mordechai as calm as possible. "I'll tell it to the world," he continues. "I hope it'll never happen again!"

Back amidst the barracks and wire fences, he dabs his eyes with a tissue. There are other survivors here. But Mordechai is centre stage. The cameras are almost all focused on him as he continues his monologue.

The Ronens at the gates of Auschwitz: from left, Moshe, Ilana, Mordechai and Sari.
STEVE PAIKIN PHOTO

"I'm here, and I can tell the world what happened," he says. "I went through this." Then, referring to his wife, son, and granddaughter, he says: "They give me the courage to be here. I wanted to be here because I can tell what happened. To all the people denying it, you can see me here. And I can tell you, it happened."

Sari continues to stay close to her grandfather. Moshe and his mother Ilana are also watching Mordechai carefully. They are torn. On the one hand, they support his decision to return here, and fully appreciate his mission. But they are both deeply concerned about the pattern these trips can manifest. Mordechai can quickly become deeply morose, descending into an increasingly agitated state, so much so, that it becomes nearly impossible to stop the tears from flowing. Moshe has learned that the key is to find just the right moment before stepping in, interrupting his father's monologue, and stopping it all. It's hard to know when. He knows Mordechai needs to get the deeply pent up emotions out of his system. It's cathartic. And it's part of the mission. But he also knows his father can tumble into an agony where he appears to be on the verge of a nervous collapse.

"I'm strong," Mordechai yells through his tears, now crying with increasing volatility. "I'm a victor! I lived!"

Moshe and Ilana are watching carefully. They can sense that the moment where they'll need to intercede is close at hand.

"They were murdered here," Mordechai says of his family members. "I'm here to tell the world. It was difficult but I had to do it. I hope this will be my last time to say goodbye to my parents. My father, my mother, my two sisters...." Mordechai is now absolutely sobbing. He appears on the verge of a meltdown. "I couldn't even say goodbye...."

Ilana leans over to Moshe and says, "It's enough, I think he's had enough."

"Come," Moshe says to his dad, interrupting the soliloquy, putting his arm around his tormented father, and bringing the interview to an end. Mordechai is crying, but the rest of his family's influence is calming him down.

One photographer has an idea. He wants all 15 survivors to pose for a picture with Lauder under the *Arbeit Macht Frei* sign. It takes some doing, getting all the survivors under the sign, and getting everyone else out of the way. But eventually, it happens. Mordechai has stopped crying and has a stoic look on his face. One female survivor even shouts out: "We should all return in 10 years!"

"I agree," says Lauder.

But unsaid, yet understood, is that this will almost certainly be the last time many, if not all of these survivors will gather here. ■

Adapted from I Am A Victor, *by Steve Paikin and Mordechai Ronen and published by Dundurn Press. www.iamavictor.ca.* Steve Paikin is anchor of *The Agenda with Steve Paikin.*

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 26, 2015

Why Orthodox Judaism needs female rabbis

Despite the RCA's latest statement on the issue, more and more women are leaning in

RABBI LILA KAGEDAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

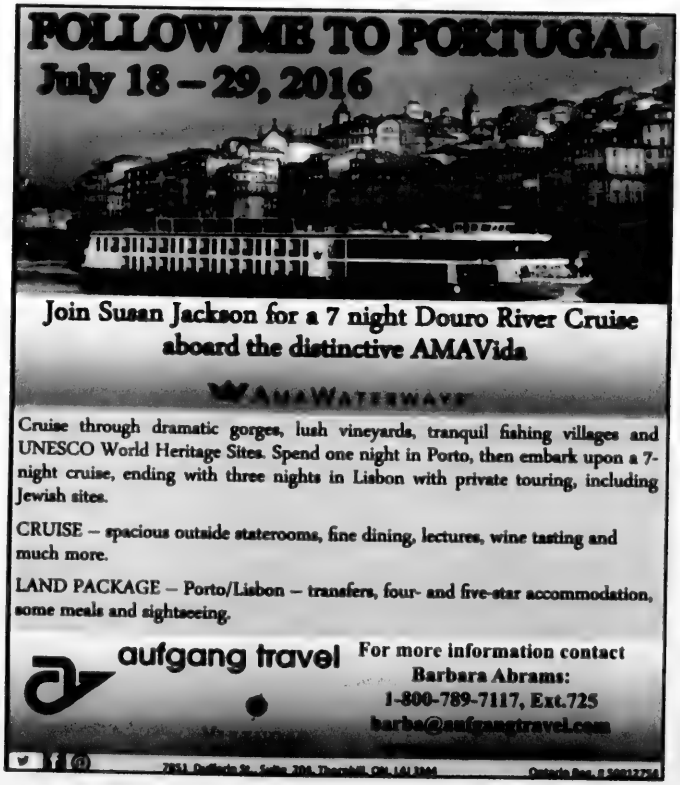
I was en route to Ottawa when I received the first alert about the Rabbinical Council of America's (RCA) resolution rejecting female ordination.

It was Erev Shabbat, a time of anticipation for welcoming the Sabbath queen. A time of peace. A time spent readying ourselves for a much needed day of rest. And yet chaos had ensued.

What a disheartening way to bring in Shabbat kodesh, the holy Sabbath. What sadness to usher in Shabbat with feelings of fragmentation rather than of unity, and with feelings of discord instead of harmony.

I wasn't surprised by the outcome of the RCA's vote per se, but I nonetheless felt frustrated. As an Orthodox rabbi, the title I assumed upon receiving smichah from Yeshivat Maharat this past June, I want to be accessible to my community. The RCA resolution made me worry that I would not be able to serve in my fullest capacity.

Rabbi Lila Kagedan says she clings to and relishes Jewish tradition.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Within minutes of that first alert, my phone began to ring off the hook, my inbox was flooded with emails from colleagues, friends, family, teachers and mentors. I called my colleagues, the incredible women in my field. They were frustrated by the resolution, but the truth was they barely had time to discuss it, as they were busy preparing for Shabbat, putting finishing touches on their sermons and rushing after a full day of work as busy clergy. Nonetheless, the tone of the correspondence – including from some individuals within the RCA – was one of comfort and support.

I am a traditional person. I cling to Jewish tradition and relish it. And it was the adherence to tradition that motivated me to take the time-honoured title bestowed upon those who have learned what I had learned at Yeshivat Maharat. Rabbi. That's what we call a person who fulfils all of the requirements to receive smichah. It was simple and clear to me.

I often wonder what would happen if a woman graduated from medical school but did not assume the title "doctor." What would happen when she went to see her patients? How would they know what she was there to do?

My talented and inspiring colleagues, the graduates of Yeshivat Maharat, have taken a variety of titles, including "maharat," "morateinu" and "rabba." They are my role models, and I respect the choice of every woman in the rabbinate to take the title that works for her. That is, after all,

> *If this were a non-issue and didn't pose a threat to the status quo of the Orthodox rabbinate, it would not have been commented on*

the philosophy of Yeshivat Maharat. The yeshiva confers the degree, and the *musmachot*, the ordainees, choose a title.

The day of my ordination was an incredible experience of celebration for me and my colleagues. And yet the fixation on my title – instead of on my learning and skill set – was a dark cloud. My new title was met with push-back and aggression in many Orthodox circles.

Nevertheless, women's ordination in Orthodoxy is alive and well. The RCA's latest resolution – a reaffirmation of its 2010 ruling on the same issue – emerged because of the success of women in the Orthodox rabbinate. If this were a non-issue and didn't pose a threat to the status quo of the Orthodox rabbinate, it would not have been commented upon. Orthodox Jews already knew the position of the RCA regarding the ordination of women. The organization's apparent need to republish and reassert its position only affirms the place that women in the rabbinate have already assumed. Women working in Orthodox clergy have already been placed in pulpit positions, educational settings and other areas of Jewish communal life. And their addition to these settings has been beneficial to the communities that they serve.

The commitment of these women to avodat HaShem, to holy work, speaks for itself. Women entering the Orthodox rabbinate are doing so specifically because of their commitment to tradition, Jewish law and Jewish practice, and because we know well that young people need role models they can relate to. We feel protective of the Jewish community, and are compelled to work to ensure its survival. And in an age when there is a woman running for president of the United States, do you really think that young Jewish women will be satisfied with only male leadership to look up to?

The entry of women into the Orthodox rabbinate follows in the great Jewish tradition of women assuming roles of leadership and service. Jewish women have been active leaders from the time of the Bible.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 26, 2015

I wish rabbis would denounce far-right Zionism

Mira Sucharov

Progressive Zionists (of which I count myself) have long been calling for big tents in our Jewish institutions. Diversity, dialogue and pluralism have been our buzzwords. The broader the tent, we've known, the more likely it is that we will have our voice heard. The call has seemed especially urgent as our Jewish institutions have tacked rightward, following the lead of Israel's government under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. And when it comes to our synagogues, places where we gather to serve our spiritual needs, the call has seemed especially important.

But here's a bold proposal: what if progressive Zionists demanded that, rather than adhere to big-tent pluralism as a principle, our pulpit rabbis actually pushed values-based Judaism? If they did, they wouldn't only give sermons condemning adultery, and they wouldn't only call for congregants to get off their iPhone on Shabbat. They would remind us that there are an array of Judaic values that are simply incompatible with right-wing Zionist thought and practice.

Consider the ideas promoted by Israeli Minister of Education Naftali Bennett, head of the Jewish Home party. Despite his party's name, Bennett's vision is anything but Jewish – that is, if we think about the values embedded in Judaic teachings such as "love your neighbour as yourself," or "in the image of God" were all humans created, or "justice, justice you shall pursue."

In an opinion piece Bennett penned in the *New York Times* last year, he laid out his vision for the future of Israel and Palestine. Under Bennett's plan, Israel would continue to occupy the Palestinians – well, 90 per cent of them at least, the ones who live in "Area A" and "Area B" – forever.

Under Bennett's vision, only Area C would be annexed to Israel, with Israeli civil law extended over that area, and its resident Palestinians (who number 300,000, or a little over 10 per cent of the total of West Bank Palestinians) would be granted Israeli citizenship. This would mean keeping nearly 90 per cent of the Palestinian population of the West Bank – roughly two million Palestinians – under the power of a military occupation over which they have no electoral say. Yes, checkpoints in those areas would be removed, and sure, Palestinian control over local governance matters would be put in place, but democracy, rights and justice would not exist.

At the JSpace Canada conference I attended in Toronto earlier this month, rabbis who care deeply about shepherding healthier and more robust dialogue on Israeli-Palestinian relations talked of creating "safe spaces" for conversations around Israel to flourish. Of course, I understand their instinct, and if I were in their shoes, I might articulate things the same way.

But what if rabbis didn't allow for every opinion to be considered valid? Just as most rabbis take a public stand on an array of behaviours – such as no cheeseburgers, no Ponzi schemes and no slander – what if they declared that the kind of Zionism being peddled by the far-right in Israel today flies in the face of timeless Jewish values?

There are a few possible outcomes, of course. The right wing might be chastened and consider a shift in viewpoint. Or the right wing, feeling alienated, might leave those shuls, with only progressive Jews remaining. More likely, though, the right wing of the tents that some rabbis have been careful to fashion might turn on them. Rabbis might in turn find themselves out of a job.

If I were an employment adviser, I don't think I could, in good faith, recommend it. Unlike professional scholars, rabbis regrettably lack the security of tenure, a convention that affords scholars like me the ability to speak, teach and write directly from our own intellectual and ethical compass. But a little part of me – the part that longs for moral clarity from our spiritual leaders – wishes they might one day try it. ■

The EU doesn't have the last word on Israel's global standing

Mordechai Ben-Dat

It was widely publicized earlier this month that the European Union lent the weight of its moral authority – now rapidly approaching zero – to the BDS movement against Israel by deciding to attach the label "Israeli Settlement" to any product from Israel made in the "occupied territories."

Prof. Eugene Kontorovich of Northwestern University points out the discriminatory aspect of the EU's policy. It "carves out a special legal rule for Israel," he explains, "not only contradicting the EU's own official position, but also going against rulings of European national courts and violating basic tenets of the World Trade Organization. It must be viewed as just one step in a broader, purposeful and gradual escalation of anti-Israel measures by the EU." Kontorovich further warns that "diplomats in Brussels and NGOs have made clear that more coercive measures will follow."

But let not the EU policy be the last word regarding Israel's standing among the nations of the world. It is important that readers have a fuller, more accurate sense of Israel's relations with other nations when weighing the moral gravity of the EU's noxious initiative against the Jewish state.

• China and Israel recently signed an agreement in Jerusalem, following initial discussions in Beijing in August, to increase co-operation between the two countries in agricultural matters relating to joint research, commercial application and farming practices. For many years now, Chinese agricultural experts and governmental officials have trained or studied modern agronomic methods in Israel.

• Israeli farming methods and agro-technology appear to be taking root in India. For example, the recently opened Indo-Israel Centre for Excellence in Gharaunda, India, is part of an expanding network of learning centres that provide Israeli expertise in drip irrigation, fertilization and greenhouse growth methods to farmers and other local Indian experts. Some 20,000 Indian farmers visit the centres in the network each year. As a result of Israeli agricultural mentors sharing their knowledge with Indian protégés, the yield in new vegetables among these farmers has grown to about six million seedlings annually as compared to half a million seedlings four years ago.

The centres are part of the Indo-Israeli Agriculture Project, a joint initiative under the auspices of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. So far, 15 centres for vegetables and fruits have been established in nine Indian states. Dan Allof, counsellor at MASHAV (Israel's agency for international development co-operation), said Israel "will set up centres [in 16 more states] in the third phase of the project between 2015 and 2018." These centres also plan to focus on modern dairy management, post harvesting and sewage water treatment for reuse in agriculture.

• *Israel21c.com* carried an interesting story about six distinct devices developed in Israel that have become standard equipment for emergency crisis or disaster relief around the world. Among the life-saving devices listed in the story is an emergency bandage used to stanch bleeding from hemorrhagic wounds. Invented by a former Israeli military medic, it is now widely used in more than 50 countries. This is the bandage that Arizona medics used in 2011 to save the life of U.S. Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords after she was shot. (See the story on *Israel21c.com* for a complete description of all of the devices.)

In a separate article, *Israel21c* reported on the locations around the globe where Israelis are currently working or have recently provided emergency relief to people in need. Disaster relief teams remain or have lately assisted in 22 locations, including the United States, Greece, Turkey, Philippines, Ethiopia, Vanuatu, Haiti, South Africa, Iraq and Gaza. Medical teams are currently in 20 countries, including Congo, Cameroon, Romania, Syria, Nepal, Iraq, Ethiopia, Taiwan and Peru. Environmental teams are in 10 countries, including Senegal, Ethiopia, Marshall Islands, Rwanda, Burundi, Turkey, Jordan, Senegal and Georgia. Psychological teams are in six countries. Educational teams are in Japan and Kenya.

One wonders how many humanitarian teams from, say, the EU, are currently providing emergency relief services around the world. ■

How to leave a lasting legacy for Jewish education

Rabbi Jay Kelman

When they turn 71, most Canadians get a windfall when they begin to cash in the savings that have accumulated in their RRSP. Having had this money accumulate tax free for 40 or 50 years and despite knowing that at some point tax would have to paid, people are nonetheless dismayed and even surprised at their large tax bills – in most cases, 50 per cent of the RRSP monies received. No wonder an entire industry has developed on how to best shelter that money.

Ironically, many would prefer not to have to receive any money from their RRSPs, postponing paying tax indefinitely. Having lived without this money for years, many do not suddenly need it at age 71. But they have no choice in the matter, since at age 71 one must begin collecting and paying tax on their lifetime savings. The amount one must withdraw begins at just over five per cent of the entire RRSP amount and increases each year so that by age 80 it is close to nine per cent of the remaining balance.

A person with an RRSP of $400,000 would be forced to withdraw and pay tax on just over $20,000, leaving them with only $10,000 after taxes per annum. If instead they were to purchase life insurance, donating the policy to a communal fund to help bring down the spiralling cost of Jewish education, the fund would receive $1 million upon their death.

That is correct. A couple aged 71 could purchase a $1 million insurance policy for an after-tax cost of only $10,000 yearly. If $10,000 is too much for some, almost all can afford to donate $1,000 a year. That $1,000 will turn into $100,000 for the community. Assuming one will live for another 20 years, in order to convert a $1,000 yearly investment to $100,000, one would need to earn an annualized return of over 16 per cent for those 20 years – a most spectacular rate of return. Such a return is approximately double the rate of return Berkshire Hathaway, managed by Warren Buffet, has earned over the last 15 years.

Such returns are only possible because the premiums are tax deductible, as the proceeds go to support Jewish education. Even if one were to live to 120, to turn a $10,000 yearly investment into $1 million requires a 3.1 per cent return, much better than other forms of guaranteed investments. And insurance is a guaranteed investment.

It is the articles I have written on funding Jewish education (they can be accessed at torahinmotion.org) that have generated the most response. In my last article, I proposed capping tuition per family at five per cent of income, and in return, the family would purchase a $1million life insurance policy. Such a policy for a 30 year-old couple would run approximately $6,000 a year (and include a tax receipt) for 15 years, at which point no further payments would be necessary. The billions that would accumulate over time would eventually allow Jewish education to be free for all.

But we need to lower tuitions now and cannot wait the 50 to 60 years before policies are paid out. By encouraging those who have retired and those who are forced to collapse their RRSPs to purchase and donate life insurance policies, we could literally have hundreds of millions, perhaps more, in 15 to 20 years' time. I urge all of you who have turned 71 to invest $1,000 a year so that the community may receive $100,000 after your sojourn on earth. For those who can invest $10,000, and I know there are thousands in our community who can do just that, know that you will leave our community with the greatest legacy possible: ensuring the future of our community. If you are interested in joining this exciting project, please email us at info@gaje.ca

I know many people feel the tuition crisis in not solvable. That is just plain wrong. We can and we will solve this crisis, and soon, if people of average means make very manageable donations. We look forward to hearing from you. ■

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org

Just what are we praying for?

Norma Baumel Joseph

Prayer is both difficult and challenging. It is difficult to pray, to stand alone often amidst a large group of not so silent individuals and offer up prayers in languages not so well understood. It is difficult to control one's thoughts, images and imagination. It is difficult to focus. Notably, it is challenging because we don't always understand the subject or object of our deliberation. Not only is it hard to focus on God or what we think of as the divine, but also it is problematic because we are not sure what prayer is supposed to accomplish.

Pious people pray to fulfil the commandment to pray. Many offer up prayers as if in discussion with God. Additionally, we have a tradition that prayer is an exercise in self-judgment. That is probably the hardest and least performed function associated with prayer.

Our liturgy is filled with words of praise and appreciation. Thanking and glorifying the Creator and giver of life seems quite proper. Even for those whose beliefs waver or question the premises of faith, prayer is still available and present in admittedly complicated but nonetheless significant ways. Gratitude is always appropriate.

But for Jews, the classic form of prayer must always include a request. Maimonides makes that a condition of prayer. So what are we doing when we ask God for something? Surely, we announce that we are not self-sufficient. We need God's graciousness and gifts. Even if we don't deserve it, we beseech the Almighty to remember our ancestors and grant us something in their merit. Thus, prayer is a sign of suitable humility.

But, we also ask for real practical benefits. Please heal my son, make my daughter behave, grant me long life, let me win the lottery. What is it we expect when we ask for these personal fundamentals? I know rationally that God cannot and will not grant all my requests. It is not a matter of disbelief, but of impossibility. The world does not work that way and even for believers there is a sense that God created the world to work according to natural law. Prayer cannot overwhelm or overturn the laws of nature, both for the believer and for the rationalist.

> *Not everyone who prays can win the lottery.*

Not every one who prays can win the lottery. (Yes I know you must buy a ticket first.) I buy lottery tickets. I pray to win. I know I won't. But I do spend some wonderful moments meditating on how I would spend the winnings. I smile as I think about helping my children, supporting a charity and honouring my parents. Is this a form of prayer for me? For in essence I am reconnecting with some basic values in this process. I am confirming that I want to give charity, or help my family, or honour my parents' memories. All positive commandments. Again, I ask, cannot this be considered an appropriate form of prayer?

Prayer requests then can be seen as a form of exchange demands. Some do believe: I pray – God gives. Perhaps this seems crass, but humanly straightforward. Otherwise, prayer can be seen as a discussion with God that displays one's value system, that does allow us to be reflective, taking a moment to judge ourselves. What is it that is important to us? What do we need and desire? Where do we stand on personal, local and global issues? If prayer can help us focus on these issues then it elevates us and raises the level of human interaction, both with God and with each other. In that case, prayer requests are vital – not just religiously required but humanly indispensable. They may even lead to our action. That type of prayer – with God's help – may really lead to redemptive action. ■

News

Are Syrian refugees comparable to Jews fleeing the Nazis?

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Postwar Jewish refugees in Halifax are assisted by a Jewish community worker.
CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS CC NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The conversation about Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's promise to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada by Jan. 1 was brought to the fore in the wake of the Nov. 13 Paris attacks.

Amid news of politicians such as Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall urging Ottawa to suspend its resettlement plan and polls suggesting a majority of Canadians now oppose it – arguing either that six weeks is insufficient time for appropriate security checks or that 25,000 is too high a number – there's been a steep rise in anti-refugee and anti-Muslim rhetoric on social media.

Interestingly, both the voices that don't want to see Canada take in Syrian refugees on the scale proposed (or at all) and the voices that consider resettling the refugees to be Canada's moral duty have variously invoked the plight of Jewish refugees who were driven out of Hitler's Europe.

In the former camp, there are some who underscore what they say are critical differences between Jewish refugees of the 1930s and '40s and the Syrian refugees of today.

Conversely, some who are pushing for liberal resettlement policies have drawn strong parallels between the two groups.

Joel Pollak, a California-based editor at the conservative website *Breitbart News Network*, wrote an article Nov. 17 arguing that Syrian refugees shouldn't be equated with World War II-era Jewish refugees.

Among his reasons were that Jews weren't a threat to the countries where they sought asylum, whereas "as many as three of the terrorists in the recent Paris attacks allegedly hid among Syrian refugees"; that Jews in World War II had nowhere to go, while Syrian refugees "theoretically have many options," such as the "57 member states of the Organization of Islamic Co-operation;" and that opposition to Jewish refugees was "'racial,'" while resistance to the Syrians stems from "security concerns."

Speaking to *The CJN*, Pollak dismissed the argument that North Americans of the 1930s feared that Jews were Communists, saying this was a fear from the 1920s that had largely abated by the early 1940s.

Pollak further acknowledged that both Syrian and Jewish refugees faced "impossible situations," but he said "it's not xenophobic to… not accept the number of Syrian refugees [the United States] has been talking about until we have a clearer idea of who these people are."

And while Jews may be sympathetic to the suffering of displaced peoples, he said, "regarding [Americans] absorbing large populations into our society, I don't see that as morally incumbent on us in anyway."

University of Toronto historian Harold Troper is the co-author of *None is Too Many* (published in 1983), which tells of Canada's refusal to admit Jews during the Holocaust. "Just as there are concerns today about the intake of Muslim refugees, in the 1930s, there was antipathy to bringing in Jews, which rested on the idea that they were outside the circle of assimilation," Troper said.

He stressed that security was a key concern then, as it has been in most historical instances where people voice opposition to refugees. "There was a fear of 'How will we make sure these people aren't Communists or anarchists, or don't have social or political ideas that are detrimental to Canada?' This fear became more acute in the '30s, as it was a constant drum-beat the Nazis used."

Troper said that unlike back then, the present Canadian government is very interested in helping to ease the refugee crisis, but among the public at large, "there are those who are using this crisis to vent an awful lot of hostility. It's given license to racists to crawl out from under rocks… and a new sense of tolerance to a level of anti-immigrant and anti-refugee views we haven't seen in a long time."

Irving Abella, a York University professor who co-wrote *None is Too Many* with Troper, said a key difference between the Jewish and Syrian refugees is that the Jews were escaping a genocide, while the Syrians are largely living in refugee camps in "relatively safe countries" outside of Syria.

"On the other hand," he said, "the need to provide a home for these refugees is something that resonates with Jews, because for so long we were the ones seeking a refuge… It seems to me it's the moral duty of the Jewish community to be as open and hospitable, as the world was closed and inhospitable to us."

Martin Sampson, director of communications at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), acknowledged there are differences between Jews who fled the Nazis and the Syrian refugees. However, while he didn't want to downplay the plight of the latter, he said it's important to recognize that "as horrible as ISIS is, they're not a state engaged in a program of industrialized genocide against a particular population… They're a scourge, they are evil, guilty of mass murder and must be defeated, but to compare them to the Nazis… dishonours the six million Jews who were murdered by the Nazis." ■

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Peterborough shul helps mosque struck by arson

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Following an arson attack on a Peterborough, Ont., mosque in the aftermath of the Paris terrorist attacks, the local Beth Israel Synagogue offered its support and reached out with a helping hand.

"We learned about the fire at the mosque, and I took it at face value, that there was a fire at the mosque," said Beth Israel Synagogue president Larry Gillman.

"I was sad, and I wanted to reach out to the Muslim community, but on Sunday, I was at an interfaith dinner with Muslims, Jews and Christians and I learned that it was a hate crime."

The Masjid Al-Salaam mosque, which serves about 1,000 people, was set on fire Nov. 14 in what Peterborough Police Chief Murray Rodd has characterized as a hate crime.

The fire caused about $80,000 in damage, entirely in the interior of the building.

"I immediately sent an email to our board with the idea of sharing our space with the Muslim community, realizing that they were not going to have a place to pray in the meantime," Gillman said, adding that the board decision was unanimous.

He said the synagogue also shares its space with the Unitarian Fellowship, which was also on board with the idea.

In addition to members of the Christian and Jewish communities offering the Muslim community a place to pray, a crowdfunding initiative also raised more than $110,000 for repairs in less than two days.

Kenzu Abdella, president of the mosque and the Kawartha Muslim Religious Association, said the overwhelming support from the rest of the community has turned a hateful crime into something positive.

"We're so grateful to everyone. It's not just the financial aspect that really makes us very proud to be Canadian and proud to be a part of the Peterborough community, but the comments we've received in support… it's been great for us," Abdella said.

"As you can imagine, at the beginning the shock was, 'How are we going to get through this?' It is a small community and we're not used to these kinds of situations. We're a small community, but a proactive community. We have open houses, and we invite the community at large to our celebrations, and we have even prayed at the synagogue before as a community, so it is not an isolated community. It is one that works together with everyone very well. So this was the last thing we expected would happen to us."

The interior of Beth Israel Synagogue

Abdella said the immediate challenge was figuring out how to accommodate the congregants, some of whom pray at the mosque five times a day.

"We also have a gathering every Friday for spiritual discussion, so it is a very active space that is taken away from us."

But because of the immediate outpouring of support from the Christian and Jewish communities, Muslims will have a place to pray while the damage to the mosque is repaired.

"We're all in this together. We may be different religions, but we're all one people and in times like this we have to stick together," Gillman said.

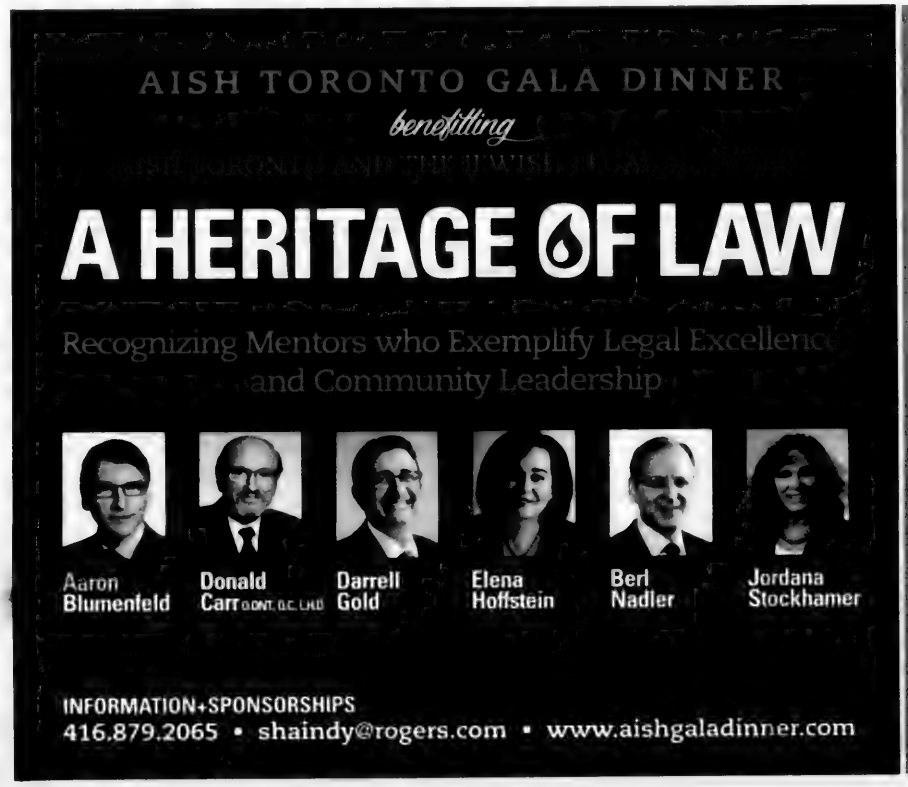
"It's unfortunate that it took an act of hate for this to happen, but maybe through it some good will come of it."

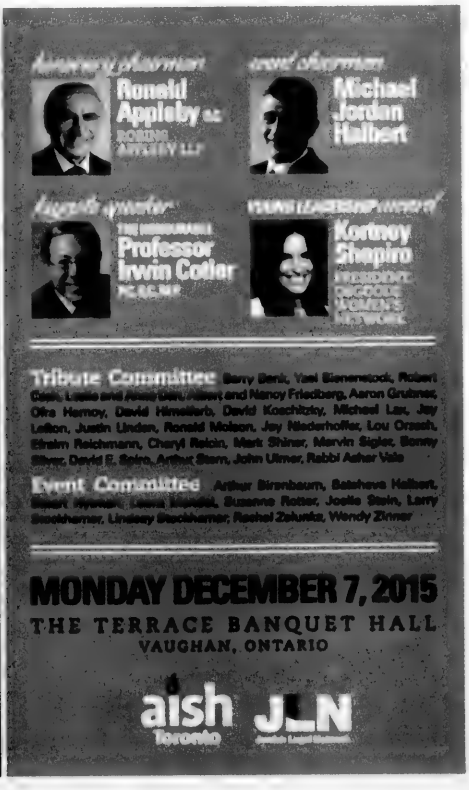
Abdella said as grateful as he is for the community's support, he wasn't surprised by it.

"We know how people are in Peterborough and they've always been great, but at the beginning it was a surprise, because the support came from everywhere. If I go to the mosque right now, even though it is locked and there is no one from our community, you will find people there leaving letters and flowers… My phone and emails – it hasn't stopped. In that sense, it's really amazing."

He said he hopes the restoration will be completed in a few weeks.

Abdella said that this incident should serve as a lesson that "when incidents like the one in Paris happens, it is important that people don't turn around and inflict acts of violence on others… This is Canada, this is not acceptable… We need to stand together to fight this kind of unacceptable behaviour from anyone to any group." ■





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Winnipeggers visit Paris on timely immigration mission

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Mel Lazareck

Mel Lazareck and Ken Zaifman couldn't have chosen a worse time – or perhaps a better time, for their purposes – to arrive in Paris.

The two Winnipeg Jewish community representatives were in Paris last week for a five-day visit to gauge interest among French Jewish families who may be considering relocation to Canada about coming to Winnipeg instead of Montreal, which might be the more obvious destination.

Lazareck, a past chair of the Combined Jewish Appeal and past president of the local Jewish National Fund organization in Winnipeg, and Zaifman, a prominent immigration lawyer, left Winnipeg on Nov. 13, for Paris, the same day terrorists turned the City of Light into a city of fear and darkness.

"We arrived on Saturday around noon, after a four-hour delay to determine whether Air Canada would actually make the Friday-night flight to Paris," Lazareck said by email from the French capital.

"Arriving at our hotel in the Marais area, we noticed that there seemed to be few people on the streets," he said.

"We then made contact with individuals that had previously responded to our ad in the Paris Jewish press. The following day, we started meeting couples and individuals, along with emailing additional people that had responded to our ad."

Lazareck added that every individual or couple he and Zaifman met were impressive. "The men and women we met were well educated, employed and most of them had young families," he said. "All of them spoke English reasonably well. They ranged in age was from their mid-20s to early 50s. All wanted to leave because of ongoing security issues," he said.

"I know we have not even scratched the surface of those that want to leave."

He said Zaifman was able to explain how the Manitoba immigration process works, and that everyone they spoke with are providing current CVs.

"My first impression of each person we met was their sincerity and commitment to leave the country that most of them had lived in their entire lives," Lazareck said.

"I tried to imagine myself at their particular age, after spending my entire life being raised, educated and pursuing my career, making the decision to leave my family, my home, because I could or did not trust the future security situation in my homeland… And let's not forget that all of the people that responded to our ad responded *before* Friday the 13th's tragedy in Paris."

The Paris initiative was Lazareck's idea. Twenty years ago, a Winnipeg Jewish delegation and a Manitoba government representative made the first of several visits to Buenos Aires in an effort to present Winnipeg as a destination for Jews looking to leave Argentina in the face of a dire economy and fears of anti-Semitism. The visits paid off, as several Jewish families from Argentina (as well as other South American countries) came to Winnipeg, which helped stabilize the community's numbers.

Lazareck is hoping to repeat that success with a similar outreach program to France's embattled Jewish community.

He and Zaifman travelled to Paris under the aegis of the federal government's annual Destination Canada initiative whose purpose, Lazareck said, is to attract skilled immigrants to this country. Organized by the Canadian Embassy in Paris, participants include representatives from provinces, territories, cities, regions, associations and French-speaking community groups, as well as settlement organizations.

France has about 700,000 Jews, the largest Jewish population in Europe. However, waves of immigration of Muslims with anti-Israel and anti-Semitic leanings has led to rising anti-Semitism in western Europe in general and France in particular. There have been several deadly attacks on Jews in France in recent years, and many French Jews are planning to leave for Israel or elsewhere.

In an interview before leaving, Lazareck said this project has been in the works for about a year. "I started meeting with people in St. Boniface [Winnipeg's largely French-speaking suburb], as well as Manitoba government people and Jewish Federation of Winnipeg representatives," he said.

"We have a good product to sell," Zaifman said, also before leaving. "We have a vibrant Jewish community with a lot of experience in resettling Jewish families."

Lazareck isn't expecting immediate results. "We are just starting out to see what interest there may be," he said. "Even if we are successful, it takes time for potential immigrants to get here [under Manitoba's provincial nominee program]." ■

'We have a long way to go, but I am optimistic'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Deborah, Yael, Miriam and our foremothers paved the way for Golda Meir and Rosalie Abella, who in turn paved the way for, to name but two, Rabba Sarah Hurwitz, the dean of Yeshivat Maharat, and Dina Najman, the rosh kehillah (head of congregation) at Kehilat Orach Elizer in New York – talented, strong leaders who have answered their calling to serve.

• • •

From the moment I entered shul the Shabbat after the RCA released its resolution, I was confronted with questions. What did it mean? Was it because I took the title rabbi? How did I feel about the RCA? What was the future for women in Orthodoxy who were ordained and becoming ordained?

In truth, I personally benefited tremendously from some RCA rabbis in my own education. I feel grateful to them, and I acknowledge that their organization has always possessed reach and impact. I strongly believe that I could give back to the RCA, and contribute to the organization that supported so many of my teachers' – and therefore my own – learning. The stated mission of the RCA is "to advance the cause and the voice of Torah and the rabbinic tradition by promoting the welfare, interests and professionalism of Orthodox rabbis all around the world." I couldn't agree more.

But there is no question that it is a struggle. Misogyny is alive and well in the Jewish community. This is a challenge that will require a radical culture and philosophical shift in order to be solved. It isn't easy to reconcile ancient philosophy with contemporary values.

And yet, we have come a long way. The simple fact that there exists an Orthodox rabbinical school for me and others to attend is monumental. There is certainly room in the tradition to make sense of these issues, but it requires some brave souls, some reorientation and, of course, open and willing communities and leaders – including some brave and confident men.

Change is happening, albeit slowly. More and more women in Orthodoxy are leaning in and are trying to take their seats at the table. We have a long way to go, but I am optimistic. Now, more than ever, women's leadership in Orthodox Judaism must be encouraged to rise up and be successful.

Alu vehatzlichu ■

Clarification

The Wry Bread humour column in last week's *CJN*, "Trudeau's cabinet balance upsets traditionalists," by A. David Levine, referred to a fictionalized Rabbinical Council of Canada (RCC), which is not to be confused with the Montreal-based organization of the same name. The real RCC is an organization of Orthodox rabbis in Montreal that meets periodically and includes rabbis from across the Orthodox spectrum, Sephardim and Ashkenazim. *The CJN* regrets the misunderstanding. ■

World can't let ISIS win, Livni tells Halifax conference

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT, HALIFAX

"We need to co-operate in order to conquer," Tzipi Livni told the 2015 Halifax International Security Forum Nov. 20 during a panel presentation.

The co-leader of Israel's Zionist Union party and former foreign affairs minister was one of more than 200 delegates attending the annual event in Halifax. She was appearing on a panel entitled "Co-operate, Contain or Conquer."

"Containment is not an option," she said, discussing terrorist threats by various groups, and specifically the recent attacks in Paris by the Islamic State. "It's about who we are and what we believe in. The free world needs to fight for its values."

Also on the panel were Georgian Defence Minister Tinatin Khidasheli, Colombian Defence Minister Luis Carlos Villegas Echeverri and U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defence Robert Work.

Work suggested the panel's title should be changed to: "Compete (against the two great powers, Russia and China), Co-operate (wherever possible), Contest (when certain states push back), Contain (whatever problems arise), and Crush (them - and ISIS fits in the last category.)"

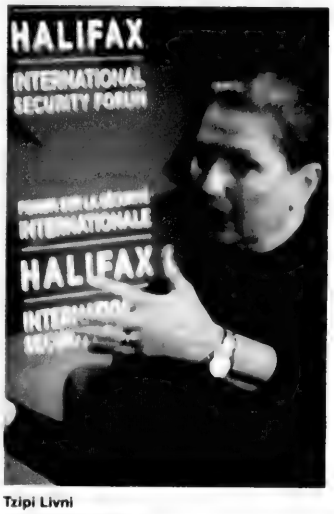
Villegas reflected on Colombia's recovery from having a crime-ridden economy to one that benefits its entire population. He said 15 years ago, it was No. 7 among Latin American economies. Today, it is third behind Brazil and Argentina, and it has improved its poverty level from 60 per cent of its people below the poverty line to less than 25 per cent today.

"Our GDP is four times greater today, and individual income has grown five times," he said. "People said 'No more violence and corruption.' We've had good government, international co-operation and stressed reform in everything we've done."

Khidasheli, her country's first female defence minister, expressed pessimism about Russia's actions, saying it does what it wants through occupation and aggressiveness in Georgia and Ukraine.

"Russia occupies 25 per cent of my country. Soldiers daily kidnap and kill peaceful people, troubling everyone as they wish. If there's any hope or chance for any dialogue to succeed, Georgians would be the first to applaud, but I don't believe there's any solution."

The three-day conference drew major government, defence and security officials from Asia, South America, western and eastern Europe, the Middle East, Japan, Mexico, United States and Canada.



Tzipi Livni
JOEL JACOBSON PHOTO

Participants tackled a wide range of issues, from taking the fight to Daesh (ISIS) on the ground and on the web, to China's growing military aggression, plus they discussed technology; refugee responsibility among nations; handling a diminishing Chinese economy; how modern Muslims are breaking tradition and moving forward; and the financing of terror and how to stem it.

Canadian Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan, concluded "We shared new and innovative ideas and, most importantly, established and renewed productive relationships. I think we're all better equipped to deal with the challenges of tomorrow."

Livni said her first trip to Halifax was beneficial. "The conference was held at a sensitive time" following attacks in Paris and Mali, she said, and "gave a wakeup call to the international community that ISIS is not only in the Middle East but here, too, and we cannot turn a blind eye. We need to fight physically for our values.

"They won't stop until they win. We cannot let them win."

The Halifax International Security Forum is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan organization based in Washington, D.C. ■

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GUEST VOICE

'Jewish MP' or 'MP who is Jewish'?

Barry Campbell

A recent article in *The CJN* ("Six Jewish MPs Head To Ottawa," Nov. 11) is concerning for two reasons. First, the headline describes six new members of Parliament elected in the recent federal election as "Jewish MPs," rather than "MPs who are Jewish." And second, implicit in the headline and the accompanying article is the notion that only these particular MPs represent the Jewish community because of their religious heritage.

I was proud to represent the Toronto riding of St Paul's in the House of Commons from 1993 to 1997. Shortly after being elected, I was invited to a conference in Israel for "Jewish parliamentarians." When we arrived at the airport in Israel, there was a huge banner greeting us. It read, "Welcome Jewish Parliamentarians." I thought that odd. I was an MP who happened to be Jewish, not a "Jewish MP."

When I served in Parliament, I used to say that I represented everyone in my riding, whether they had voted for me or not. (I must confess that I took a certain devilish pleasure in stating those words to people I knew had not voted for me).

The CJN article demeans MPs like Carolyn Bennett, who I personally asked to run for the Liberals in St. Paul's when I decided to leave politics, and, most recently, Marco Mendicino, the new Liberal MP for Eglinton-Lawrence, the riding formerly held by Joe Oliver. Both have worked hard to know our communities, and both were ignored in the article even though they represent ridings with large Jewish populations. This suggests that they don't or can't represent Jewish constituents.

The article also may do a disservice to the six Jewish MPs featured, who will be perceived by some (unfairly so) to represent the Jewish community and not all the constituents that live in their ridings. In my experience, a non-Jewish MP may, in certain instances, have a tremendous impact on an issue of concern to the community simply because it is unexpected when someone outside the community explains how a matter came to be important to them.

The issue of ethnicity in politics is a tough one. Every community is proud of its members who attain public office.

> *In politics, 'Johnny one-notes' are ignored eventually.*

There tends to be a view within ethnic, linguistic or religious communities that "their" MPs will have a special sensitivity to "our issues" and "go to bat" for the community. But community media should not inadvertently undermine MPs from their community with the suggestion that community interests are the only thing that matters to them. That would in fact be a mistake for the MP and shortsighted for the community.

In politics, "Johnny one-notes" are ignored eventually. After a while, the caucus stops listening. The more one says about his or her community's special issues, the more they are tuned out. MPs need to pick their fights carefully, decide when to take a stand and not spend that currency too freely, too often or too predictably. Besides, if an MP from a particular community is to reflect his community's views – well, what are those views? Our communities are not monolithic, after all.

That said, there is an important place for ethnicity in politics. Hyphenated MPs (whether the hyphen is before or after "MP") bring their unique perspectives to Ottawa, and I have never known any to be shy about that. Canada, of course, must be the sum of its parts – and that should be reflected in Parliament. And when an issue of particular significance to a community comes up, or there arises an issue where a community has a particular historical experience, it falls to an MP from that community to explain, to respond, to share lessons learned, to dispel.

I just don't want MPs who are Jewish to be alone when they do that. ■

Barry Campbell is the former member of Parliament for the Toronto riding of St Paul's. He is president of Campbell Strategies and publisher of parli.ca

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JNF event stresses solidarity amid terror wave in Israel

JONATHAN DICK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The themes of coexistence and solidarity were underscored by good vibrations from Beach Boys co-founder Brian Wilson at the Jewish National Fund of Toronto's annual Negev Dinner.

The Nov. 22 event honoured Joseph Frieberg and Kevin Green for their contribution to their local community and the State of Israel. Frieberg and Green's late father, Harold Green, founded Israel Tennis Centers (ITC) in Canada, and they have "stay[ed] with the organization since its inception 40 years ago," said JNF CEO Josh Cooper.

The event, held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, hosted 1,600 guests, who were treated a special musical performance by the legendary Wilson.

He was accompanied by former bandmates Al Jardine and Blondie Chaplin. They played many of their most famous songs, including *California Girls*, *I Get Around* and *Good Vibrations*. As Cooper put it when asked why Wilson was tapped to play at the event, "Everyone loves the Beach Boys!"

Brian Wilson JONATHAN DICK PHOTO

Under Cooper's leadership, the JNF's Negev Dinner has continually beaten its own fundraising records. "We are very fortunate that from coast to coast, attendance and fundraising at all of our Negev Dinners has increased over the years," said Cooper, CEO since 2012. "People realize that if you want to help support and build Israel, JNF is the natural organization to help fulfil your charitable objectives."

Proceeds from this year's dinner will fund two major building projects in Israel. The first is a new multi-purpose facility at the Samson Israel Tennis Center in Be'er Sheva, and the second is an Israel Tennis Center in Sderot, the town adjacent to Gaza that has been targeted by rocket fire from the territory in recent years. Both facilities will feature programs that promote coexistence between Jews and Arabs, as well as Ethiopian integration, and programs for the physically and developmentally disabled and youth at risk.

"Be'er Sheva, the capital of the Negev, is one of the fastest growing cities in Israel. JNF has established many projects helping all of the citizens of Be'er Sheva, Druze, Bedouin, Arab, Jewish, etc. The Israel Tennis Centers, which is the hub of outstanding coexistence programming, needs to be expanded. Therefore, the ITC and JNF felt this was the best centre to expand," Cooper said.

"On a summer fact-finding trip between JNF and ITC, the tour went to Sderot to highlight some of JNF's work. Upon meeting with the mayor of Sderot, and its residents, Mr. Frieberg and Mr. Green fell in love with the city. They were adamant that we help the people of Sderot, and so in partnership with the city of Sderot, a 15th Israel Tennis Center will be built," Cooper added.

Israel Tennis Centers is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1976 to improve the quality of life for Israeli children.

"With your support, more children will be able to play, have fun, and just be children," Green said as he received a standing ovation.

Cooper stressed the importance of Jewish and Arab coexistence and communal solidarity being aspects of this year's projects.

"While we are best known for our work in forestry and water management, much of our work in Israel over the past few decades has been coexistence programs. We want to ensure that no Israeli citizen is left behind," Cooper said.

"We feel strongly that we need to continue to build relationships between all citizens of Israel. The recent wave of terror attacks in Israel has impacted Israelis of all backgrounds, specifically over the past few months. This particular project will address the increased need for coexistence programs in Israel's south."

In Frieberg's acceptance speech, he stated, "We at ITC have always believed in rackets, not rockets." ■

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Leaders from Israeli settlements to speak in Toronto

SHERI SHEFA
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Amidst the wave of terror that has gripped Israel since October, two leaders of settlement communities in the West Bank will speak to the Toronto Jewish community about the history of their respective Israeli settlements, as well as how Israelis are coping with the constant threat of violence and terrorism.

On Nov. 29, Daniella Weiss, who served 15 years as the mayor of Kedumim, a West Bank settlement, and led the 10 families who founded the first Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria 40 years ago, will address the Toronto Jewish community at Shaarei Shomayim synagogue.

Weiss, a controversial figure who was arrested in 2008 after a confrontation in Hebron that ended with her being charged for obstructing police officers, is the general secretary of the Nachala settlement movement.

Joining her in Toronto is the mayor of Kiryat Arba/Hebron, Malachi Levinger, the son of the late Rabbi Moshe Levinger, who was one of the founders of the settlement movement following the Six Day War in 1967.

Malachi Levinger

Rabbi Levinger, a student of religious Zionist leader Rabbi Tzvi HaCohen Yehuda Kook, was one of the founders of the Kiryat Arba settlement, and is credited for the return of the Jews to Hebron.

His son, Malachi, told *The CJN* that when he comes to Toronto, he wants to talk about the settlements in Judea and Samaria, "how my father started the settlements in Yehuda and Shomron... I want to speak about the beit midrash from Rav Yehuda Kook, from where my father learned about Eretz Yisrael and about all the land in Eretz Yisrael."

Since the establishment of Kiryat Arba in the early 1970s, Levinger said there are about 600 Jews who reside in the Jewish quarter in the old city of Hebron, which Levinger compared to the size of a city block in Toronto.

"I want people in Toronto to hear about the big spirit in the settlements, that people want to do everything to connect the Jewish story in Hebron," he said.

Levinger, who said his trip to North America will be a short one because "it is not a good time to be for a long time out of Israel," spoke about the recent and ongoing violence facing his community and the rest of his country.

When he spoke to *The CJN* in early November, he said his community was experiencing a three-day stretch of quiet.

"Three days of quiet for us is a long time this month," he said, adding that despite the terror attacks, "Baruch HaShem, people are still coming to visit."

As the mayor of a town that has been experiencing a number of terror attacks in the past few weeks, Levinger can only offer the members of his community encouragement and a word of caution.

"What I am talking about to the people of Kiryat Arba is that you should still live normally, but keep safe when you go on the road, when you go visit another area," he said.

Some of the recent attacks that have either injured or killed Israelis in or near his town include an Oct. 8 incident in which a 25-year-old man was stabbed in the upper body by a Palestinian. On Oct. 20, a man was driving through Hebron when his car was pelted by a hail of rocks. When he exited his car, he was hit by a truck driven by a Palestinian and killed. Days later, a Palestinian stabbed a 19-year-old soldier multiple times in the neck near the Kiryat Arba settlement.

Levinger said people are fearful, but, especially after the few days of quiet that they enjoyed, people go about their day.

When asked if he saw an end to the recent wave of terror in the near future, he said, "I hope so. I don't know and the army doesn't know. We hope it will be quiet, because we want to live normally in Kiryat Arba/Hebron and we want the people who don't want to visit us to come and visit us and not be afraid." ■

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Knife intifadah part of rejectionist policy: analyst

PAUL LUNGEN
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David Hazony

The attacks began right around the time Israelis celebrated the High Holidays. Seemingly at random, Palestinians, many of them young, began stabbing Jews with knives in what has come to be known as the knife intifadah.

But for Middle East analyst David Hazony, the attacks are not random, if by random you mean something that comes out of the blue. No, Hazony said, these attacks have a genesis. There's a straight line that can be drawn from the current round of terrorist attacks back to the attacks on Hebron in 1929, and even to the Farhud pogrom on Jews in Baghdad in 1941.

What you have here, Hazony said in an interview with *The CJN*, is a continuation of a violent, rejectionist, genocidal Palestinian aggression first laid in place by the mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini. That's the same Palestinian political and religious leader who Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu credited with inspiring Hitler to murder the Jews. Netanyahu may have been too quick to attribute Hitler's crimes to the mufti, but in his own right, the cleric set in place the Palestinian agenda that Israelis are experiencing today.

Hazony, managing director at the Israel Project, a Washington, D.C. think-tank, and editor of *The Tower* magazine, was in Toronto last week to address students at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto and give a lecture at Adath Israel Congregation. That speaking engagement was co-sponsored by the shul and B'nai Brith Canada. Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, introduced Hazony at the synagogue event.

Looking at the latest round of terror attacks in Israel, Hazony said it's about what you could expect from young Palestinians who have been bombarded with anti-Semitic propaganda in their school textbooks and on the media their whole lives.

"When an 18-year-old stabs a 70-year-old woman, this is the product of a generation of kids raised under the Palestinian Authority, indoctrinated to hate Jews and to see Jews as a legitimate target of violence," he said.

People should not be surprised that this is the legacy of a government created by former PA president Yasser Arafat, who was inspired by al-Husseini and who created a governmental authority in which demonizing Jews is taught in schools. Preparing Palestinians for war, not peace, is the goal.

Contrary to media interpretation of events, the purported expansion of settlements has nothing to do with it, Hazony maintained. In fact, in the same week that U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry visited Israel and criticized settlement expansion, *Ha'aretz* published a report that found expansion under Netanyahu was lower than under any previous Israeli leader.

Hazony urged supporters of Israel to do their best to correct popular misconceptions about the reality on the ground and to influence the overall narrative about the dispute. For years the Israeli-Palestinian story has been framed by Israel's opponents, who refer to the country as an illegitimate, apartheid state and vilify it at every turn.

Instead, "we need to arm ourselves for this battle... and understand the reality." Learn the facts, he advised, and make the case that Israel is a flourishing culture with an expanding economy whose numerous achievements are improving the lot of millions of people around the world.

Addressing the Iran nuclear threat, Hazony said the majority of the U.S. Democratic party supports the P5 + 1 deal, but it has divided the Jewish community. Mainstream Jewish organizations, such as the Anti-Defamation League, are "skeptical" about it, while J Street backs it.

U.S. President Barack Obama cites J Street in making the case for the deal while also adopting some of its rhetoric in criticizing Israel, including the argument that the country's own policies are not consistent with Jewish values.

Hazony suggested that while the United States continues its military co-operation with Israel, Obama has "created daylight" with Israel on a number of fronts and criticized its policies."Obama and Kerry have emphasized narratives about the conflict that are not helpful," he said, referring specifically to the critique of Israeli settlements.

Expanding on that theme, Hazony said the United States has also alienated other longstanding allies in the region, including Egypt and the Gulf States, while at the same time it has worked closely with Iran.

At the heart of that policy is a desire to scale back U.S. involvement in the region and cede the role of regional power to Iran. ■

Youth, business leaders should connect, event told

JODIE SHUPAC
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Entrepreneur Dave Wilkin has made it his mission to solve what he's deemed the "unfortunate love story" between industry leaders and young people.

Wilkin was speaking at a Nov. 17 event held at Creeds Coffee Bar and hosted by Genesis: UJA Federation's Centre for Jewish Innovation, in partnership with the Annex Shul, Hillel Ontario, JVS, Onward Israel, The House, Moishe House, UJA's Community Connect and UJA Young Leaders.

Wilkin, the 27-year-old founder of an on online networking platform called TenThousandCoffees, told the audience of close to 100 20- and 30-somethings about his career trajectory and how it was shaped by his desire to more effectively connect younger generations with professionals established in the job market.

The event, which included time for mingling and networking, was part of the 2015 speaker series run by Genesis, a UJA initiative that works to support emerging Jewish non-profits and provide mentorship, networking and skills training to young adults in the community.

According to a quick show of hands, the audience identified itself as a mix of aspiring entrepreneurs, those looking for new job opportunities, and those looking to develop new skills.

Wilkin, who is not Jewish and grew up in the small northern Ontario town of Lively, explained that his experience as a teenager starting a mentorship program that served communities north of Barrie led him to identify a gap between older industry professionals and youth.

"I saw that on one side we had all these youth with great ideas – this entrepreneurial and connected group who were simultaneously the most underemployed generation in history… and on the other hand, we had these heads of industries saying they weren't going to exist in 10 or 15 years if they didn't connect with youth," he said.

While the two groups rely on another to thrive – youth to access job opportunities and career advice and industry leaders to gain insight into how to revitalize their businesses and ensure they're sustainable – Wilkins said the two parties "were connecting using these random, archaic, Neanderthal tactics."

CEOs and other leaders he spoke to were typically only meeting with young people who were the children of their friends, which Wilkin said is limiting.

Further, he said, conventional mentorship programs often don't allow prospective mentors and mentees to shop around before establishing a relationship.

Dave Wilkin, founder of TenThousandCoffees, speaks at an event hosted by Genesis: UJA Federation's Centre for Jewish Innovation.
CAMILA GARGANTINI PHOTO

In 2010, Wilkin, who studied biochemistry at the University of Waterloo, launched what quickly became Canada's largest youth consulting company, Redwood Strategic Inc. It grew into a multi-million dollar company and acquisition offers began to roll in, but Wilkin said the "small town in me starting talking, and I realized I wouldn't only be selling the business, but my soul… I decided to reinvest all the funds into trying to really solve the unfortunate love story [between youth and industry leaders]."

Wilkin saw that meeting face to face for coffee was an effective way to build a relationship, share ideas and even create a job opportunity, but the model needed to be expanded so people weren't simply meeting others in their existing circles.

And so, in January 2014, he launched the TenThousandCoffees website, which features short profiles of top leaders from a range of fields as well as those of emerging entrepreneurs or people looking for job opportunities.

People use the site to contact one another and set up coffee meetings that will involve what Wilkin called "mutually beneficial conversations." He said the site has been so well received that he spent less than $10,000 on marketing and that schools and organizations were soon asking if they could "borrow" the website.

With that in mind, TenThousandCoffees has started partnering with several non-profits each year. Genesis is one such partner: TenThousandCoffees will donate its model to Genesis on a trial basis and allow people in the Genesis network to connect with one another using a specific-to-Genesis TenThousandCoffees hub.

"Genesis is thrilled to expose our community to TenThousandCoffees as a wonderful resource," said Alana Kayfetz, Genesis' director. ■

To join the network, visit: https://www.tenthousandcoffees.com/vip/uja, or contact Kayfetz at akayfetz@ujafed.org.

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The Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, extends sincerest condolences to the entire Spitz family on the passing of Inge, z"l, a Holocaust survivor and longtime volunteer speaker at our Centre who was dedicated to Holocaust education and remembrance.

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Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre

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Two years in, business accelerator seen as a world leader

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As startups go, YEDI has done pretty well. In only two years of existence, it has matched about 100 budding entrepreneurs and non-profit innovators with people to fund them. It has helped a good number of Russian immigrants improve their education, find their legs and get started in Canada. And earlier this month it was recognized for all it has done by being named the number one ranked business accelerator in Ontario and number three in all of North America at an award ceremony sponsored by UBI Global and Ontario Centres for Excellence.

Of course, YEDI – York Entrepreneurship Development Institute – is not a startup in the conventional sense of the term. It's not a for-profit company, with a new product that it is trying to sell. YEDI is the brainchild of Russian-born businessman Marat Ressin. It is intended to act as an accelerator of startups – an organization that helps kickstart the careers of its participants by offering first class business education, mentorship and access to investors.

It also fosters a sense of social responsibility in those advancing commercial concepts and it trains innovators in the non-profit sector in the importance of making balance sheets actually balance.

Ressin, who has extensive expertise in growing small businesses and turning around failing companies, approached Rabbi Mendel Zaltzman of the Russian Jewish Community Centre (RJCC) of Ontario with the idea of pitching the program to members of his community.

The program fit neatly into what Russian Jewish community leaders had been pushing.

"They want us to provide services that he haven't in the past. That is, get people into business at a high level," Rabbi Zaltzman told *The CJN* when YEDI was launched. In doing so, "we are creating the leaders of the next generation."

The RJCC advertised the program extensively and many in the Russian Jewish community responded.

So far, about one-third of the program's students are Russian Jews, Ressin said in a telephone interview from Hong Kong.

However, the selection committee, which determines which of the applicants is chosen, does so without knowing the names of those it selects, Ressin noted.

Marat Ressin speaks at a YEDI Venture Fair.

There are plenty of success stories in the Russian Jewish community, Ressin said. One is that of former student Judy Chaimov, who created Laser Weld Creation, which employs laser welding in the medical, aerospace and automotive sectors. On the non-profit side, you can find Wheel Dance, which provides wheelchair ballroom and Latin dance classes to individuals with ambulatory disabilities and their able-bodied partners.

Ressin said students benefit from high level education delivered by the Schulich Executive Education Centre, one of the partners in YEDI. Graduates earn a certificate from a prestigious business school and come to understand the importance of a workable business plan to making their ideas become reality, he said.

While in Hong Kong, Ressin spoke at two universities about YEDI and expects to create programs for them as well. More than that, he said, there is the opportunity to create an international network into which local YEDI graduates can hook in and find "soft landing opportunities" for their concepts.

In addition to the Schulich school and the RJCC, other partners in YEDI include The PresenTense Group, a volunteer-based organization that fosters social entrepreneurship in Jewish communities around the world, 3V Communications and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. ■

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Canadians, Israelis collaborate on biofuel research

PAUL LUNGEN
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Drive by a farm in southern Ontario in October or November and you'll see fields golden and thick with plant matter. The corn or other crops have been harvested, but there is plenty that remains – the agricultural equivalent of end cuts and remnants.

Farmers feed some of it to their livestock, but when McGill University scientist Donald Smith looks at fields overflowing with biomatter, he doesn't see just cow fodder. He sees fuel, admittedly not something that can be put directly into your car engine today, but the biomass that can provide a substitute for petroleum in the future.

As things stand today, the technology to turn that brown gold into liquid fuel in a way that can compete economically with fossil fuels is still years away, but there's no time like the present to set out on the research journey that will make it a commonplace reality.

With that in mind, Smith, along with 10 other scientists and researchers from BioFuelNet Canada, travelled to Israel earlier this month to attend the "Israel-Canada Workshop on Advanced Biofuels."

The conference was held at the Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment at the Rehovot campus of Hebrew University. It was sponsored in part by Israel's Ministry of Science, Technology and Space, with input from Anat Bonshtien, a member of the "oil free initiative governmental team" inside the Prime Minister's Office.

Getting Canadians to move away from a petroleum-based dependency is something Smith advocates.

"We're trying to move the country to renewable fuels, from fossil fuels," said Smith, scientific director of BioFuelNet, a network of more than 100 researchers whose goal is to procure alternative energy sources while fostering links among scientists across the country.

With the trip to Israel, BioFuelNet is expanding its international relationships. There is potential for joint research, the exchange of ideas leading ultimately to joint commercial ventures in the field, between Canadians and Israelis, Smith said.

Yitzhak Hadar said that when it comes to biofuels, co-operation between Canadians and Israelis is just beginning. But there are good reasons to believe these can develop into something substantial, he said.

Yitzhak Hadar

Both sides are interested in finding alternatives to fossil fuels and both have pretty advanced research communities. And while Israel doesn't generate the biomass that Canada does, with its significant agricultural and forestry industries, it does have a sophisticated agricultural technology sector, he said.

Hadar, a professor of microbiology at Hebrew U, said "two of the most significant challenges to humanity in the 21st century will be fossil fuel limitations and the effect on climate change." With recent scientific breakthroughs in understanding plant genomics, new possibilities have emerged for exploiting plant biomass. "A more sustainable and bio-based society is now a realistic possibility. In a bio-based economy, feedstock will be produced from renewable bio-resources while economic growth will be linked to sustainable development," he said.

Hadar said the purpose of the workshop was "to promote, facilitate and support collaboration and exchange of innovative ideas related to responsible and sustainable conversion of biomass to biofuels and bio-products toward building a viable society."

The two-day workshop brought together Canadian and Israeli experts from universities, government and industry. The main topics discussed were crop production (breeding, genetics and genomics); biomass utilization, including forest and municipal waste; and policy, economics and intellectual property.

No agreements were signed or partnerships created at the seminar, but Hadar is hopeful the meetings will "create one-on-one conversations and start the exchange of ideas and hopefully, lead to collaboration." ■

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JPost reporter says Israel is getting 'better and better'

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT, HALIFAX

Israel Television has called *Jerusalem Post* chief political correspondent, Gil Hoffman, "the most optimistic man in Israel."

His remarks to a group of community leaders at Chabad House in Halifax Nov. 18 certainly reflected that, as he stressed, "Despite challenges, things are better and better in Israel. In 69 years, it's never been a better time to raise a family in Israel. I hope and pray even better days are ahead for the people of Israel and the region."

Despite spending time discussing the ills of the Middle East, the threats against Israel from each of its neighbours and the challenges it faces, Hoffman told his audience that "helping Israel is EASY – 'education' (of others about Israel's strengths), 'advocacy' (for Israel), 'solidarity' (of everyone) for Israel and 'your money.'"

With a smile, he said the latter would help the Jewish National Fund to continue its good work in Israel. JNF is supporting his cross-Canada speaking tour.

Hoffman had been in Calgary and Edmonton prior to Halifax, and was visiting Mount Allison University in Sackville and Moncton, N.B. after Halifax, and then speaking in London, Hamilton, Waterloo and Ottawa, Ont. He had attended the Jewish Federations of North America's General Assembly in Washington, D.C., plus he had engagements in Tucson, Ariz., Philadelphia, Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio.

When answering audience questions, the Chicago-raised Hoffman, who moved to Israel 17 years ago, said new Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau "will have to change some policies to be taken seriously by Israel and the world. Unfortunately, he supported the Iran nuclear deal, for example."

Hoffman said Canada mattered under former prime minister Stephen Harper.

"He strongly backed Israel. His pro-Israel voice counted in G8 voting. Now Canada is like every other country. Trudeau is taking selfies in Europe. He'll be on Facebook, and that's nice, but Israel won't listen to him."

He talked of the concern of continued attacks on Israeli citizens. With humour, he reflected on removing his kippah on

Gil Hoffman

the street in Jerusalem, "my city," as a result of the recent wave of stabbings.

His wife joked with him, "She said to me, 'There's no point (removing it). You look so Jewish, next time, take off your nose.'"

When referring to the threat from ISIS, Hoffman said ISIS controls land 20 times the size of Israel.

"Israel's land was acquired and embellished by (JNF) metal boxes. ISIS acquired its land by another kind of metal."

His remarks covered the threat of Hezbollah – "They have 120,000 rockets ready and aimed at Israel, probably not to be used in the near future, but 30 times what Hamas used in its most recent rocket attacks" – as well as the use of distraction by PA President Mahmoud Abbas to retain control of his people in Gaza – "The Temple Mount is in danger; the Jews are contaminating Temple Mount with their feet" – and the many chances Abbas had to make peace with Israel in the last several years but did not.

"We will continue to thrive. We will succeed economically and continue to build a beautiful country, with the help of JNF, and we will see Muhammad and Menachem playing together in playgrounds built by JNF."

He would not commit when asked which U.S. presidential candidate would be best for Israel – "They're all saying the right things," he said – but joked, "I'd vote for Harper for president of the United States."

Hoffman also praised those keeping anti-Israeli journalists on their toes by writing letters to the editor, making fun of them on Facebook, and trying to change their outlook. ■

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Shamai Keinan
Chairman of the Board of Directors, Herzog Hospital, Jerusalem, Israel

Dr. Yehezkel Caine
Director-General and Chief Executive Officer, Herzog Hospital, Jerusalem, Israel

Wendy Switzer Myles
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Shul offers free Hebrew school, Torah High enrolment up

SHERI SHEFA
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For many parents who may have been priced out of the Jewish day school system but haven't given up on their commitment to offering their children Jewish programming, there are a number of options in the GTA to consider.

The newest program is one offered at Shaar Shalom Synagogue that launched in September. It's a free after-school Jewish learning program called Atid, available only to members of the shul.

Run by Shaar Shalom's rebbetzin Bettina Schwarzman, a graduate of Hebrew University of Jerusalem's education program with more than 20 years' teaching experience, the program teaches children from age five to bar and bat mitzvah about Israel, Jewish holidays, Jewish values and Hebrew.

Shaar Shalom spiritual leader Rabbi Steven Schwarzman said he hopes the fact the program is free for shul members will encourage people to join the congregation.

"I designed it this way, because Shaar Shalom used to have a Hebrew school up until a few years before I came. From what I'm told, a lot of people sent their kids to the school and it was a great school, but they never joined the shul, and it was not financially sustainable under that model," Rabbi Schwarzman explained.

"And I'm a big believer of giving people reasons to join a shul. While I'm a big believer in day schools... because they are the best in Jewish education, it doesn't work for everybody – certainly financially it doesn't work for every family."

He said the program, which is available four days a week and so far has attracted seven kids, isn't meant as an alternative to day school, but rather as "a Conservative Jewish education in a flexible environment in terms of logistics, but with wonderful content."

For high school students, Torah High, an after-school Jewish program that is an Ontario Ministry of Education-inspected private school offering Jewish studies courses for credit, is gaining momentum.

Preschoolers celebrate Shabbat at Robbins Hebrew Academy.

> *Torah High is for parents who say, 'I don't want to send my kids to CHAT, but I don't want my kids to have nothing.'*

Rabbi Glen Black, Torah High's director of education, said enrolment for the program jumped by about 25 per cent this year to 400 students.

Rabbi Black said there are a number of reasons for this increase in enrolment to the program, which costs $599 per course.

He attributes some of the success to Einat Enbar, director of marketing and communications, who helped with recruitment.

"The second reason is that the way we've done recruitment is less about marketing and more about word of mouth. Working with students who are currently with us, getting them to share that. Much of the recruitment has been done by the parents," Rabbi Black said, adding that parents will host information sessions for their friends.

"Based on some focus groups and market research we've been conducting... we've been able to come up with courses that students want, like Jewish leadership courses, Israel advocacy courses, even business courses."

He said most of the new students have enrolled in courses that weren't being offered last year.

Although he's happy to offer a Jewish studies program for students who attend public school, he said it's no substitute for a full-day Jewish private school.

"This is really for the kid who is interested to learn more, but don't have it as part of their full-day experience... we only want to be an alternative to nothing... Torah High is for parents who say, 'I don't want to send my kids to CHAT, but I don't want my kids to have nothing.' Torah High is the answer."

But for parents considering Jewish day school, Robbins Hebrew Academy (RHA) head of school Claire Sumerlus hopes the fact that RHA is now the only Jewish school in Ontario to receive accreditation from the Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS) will convince parents of the added benefit of choosing RHA, where enrolment currently stands at 360 students.

"It's been a long process – a five-year planning process for us. We had a national case evaluation committee come to RHA and they evaluate pretty much every aspect of the school based on 11 specific case standards. Those standards cover everything – admissions, development, alumni, school community, academics, the financial statements, governance – you name it, it's covered," Sumerlus said.

"For me, being accredited means that we've reached the pinnacle of excellence and the curriculum is on par with the best in the world. It means we're accountable to it. We can all say that we're great, but we've had a team of experts from the greatest schools in Canada come through and saw that we are and meet the standards."

The Canadian Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) was established in 1981 as a national network for member schools supporting collaborative initiatives in leadership, education, management and governance.

"Of course I want people to know about it. It differentiates us in a totally different way." ■

RUTH LOEWENTHAL

The Yeshiva University family is deeply grieved by the passing of Ruth Loewenthal, of blessed memory, the beloved sister of Edith (and Kurt) Rothschild. Edith and Kurt, formerly of Toronto, Ontario, and currently living in Jerusalem, Israel, are major leaders on behalf of Yeshiva University and Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University. They are YU Guardians and Kurt is a member of the RIETS Board of Trustees. We extend heartfelt condolences to Edith and Kurt, as well as to Shlomo (and Nechama) Loewenthal, Moshe (and Batya) Loewenthal and their entire families. Ruth Loewenthal was a widely respected resident of New York who made aliyah some 50 years ago, where she married and nurtured her family with love and compassion for many years. May the entire Loewenthal/Rothschild family be comforted among all who mourn for Zion and Jerusalem.

Yeshiva University **Richard M. Joel** *President* **Norman Lamm** *President Emeritus*

FRAN SONSHINE, NATIONAL CHAIR, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
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extend their deepest condolences on the passing of

DR. MAX GLASSMAN Z"L

TO HIS BELOVED WIFE, GIANNA GLASSMAN,
HIS CHILDREN, SHOSHANA, RANANA, JORDANA, AND NEWTON,
AND HIS GRANDCHILDREN, JOSHUA, DANIEL, MARTIN,
MIRA, ALEXANDRA, AND GRAYDON.

We mourn the passing of Max Glassman, a cherished friend and benefactor of Yad Vashem and the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem. We are indebted to him for his generous support of Holocaust education, helping to pass on the universal lessons of the Holocaust to future generations.

Guided by the values of chesed and tzedakah, Max Glassman devoted himself generously and selflessly to the betterment of humankind. Communities in Canada and Israel have lost a dear friend and advocate.

May the memory and legacy of Max Glassman be a source of comfort to the Glassman Family. המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

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Thousands attend funeral of slain former CHAT teacher

SHERI SHEFA
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Rabbi Ya'acov Don, a former shaliach who taught at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto who was one of the victims of the Nov.19 terrorist attack in Gush Etzion that left three people dead and five more wounded, was buried the next day in Israel.

Rabbi Don, a husband, a father of four, and an educator who spent four years in Toronto as a Jewish studies teacher at TanenbaumCHAT between 1996 and 2000, was killed in the Gush Etzion region of the West Bank when a Palestinian armed with an Uzi submachine gun opened fire on cars near the settlement of Alon Shvut.

According to *Ha'aretz*, the attack in Gush Etzion came just hours after two people were stabbed and killed in Tel Aviv by a Palestinian terrorist.

Rabbi Don died of his injuries at the Hadassah Ein Kerem Medical Center.

Thousands attended his funeral, where his wife, Sara, said, "You always told me 'what did I do to deserve you as a wife?' but I am the one who was blessed. I was blessed with a loving, attentive husband, you had so much feeling and warmth — toward me, your children, and your parents.

"You were a simple man in the greatest sense of the word — you never wanted anything. I thank God for the 22 happy years we had together," she continued. "From heaven, please pray to God to give us strength."

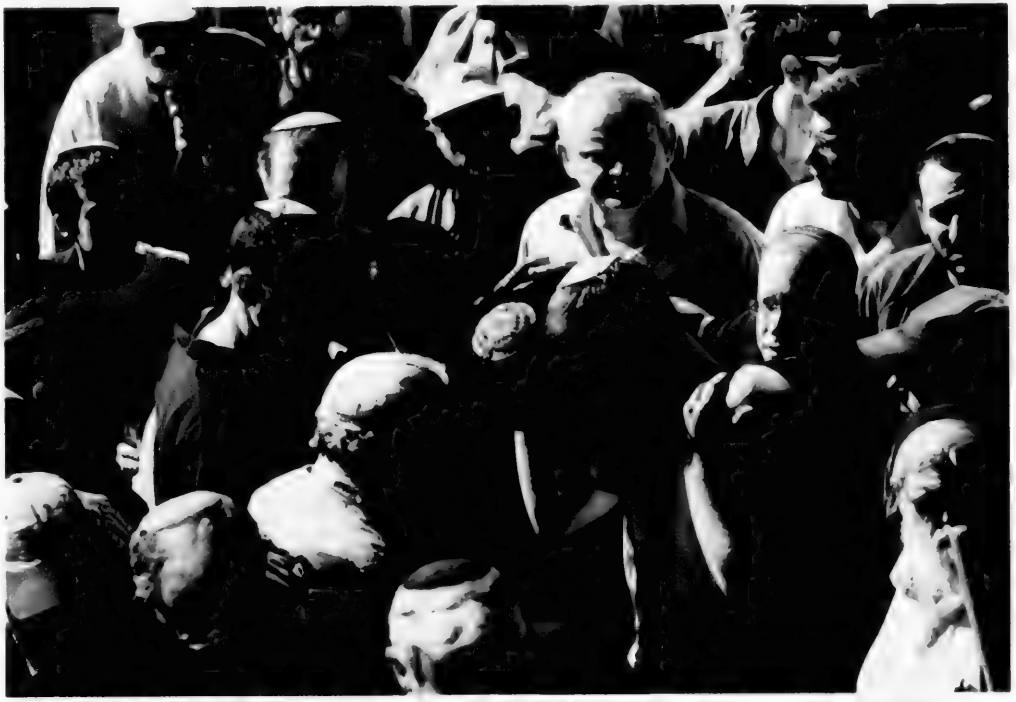
Rabbi Don's son, Aviad, also eulogized his father, and said, "I don't understand why and how you aren't here anymore. How a person like you could be murdered because of this evil... Teach me how to be optimistic at times like these."

In Toronto, Joshua Sable, a teacher at TanenbaumCHAT who worked with Rabbi Don, spoke about the influence he had on his students both inside and outside of the classroom.

"He had a wonderful ability to connect with young people and to encourage them to find their own voice and to be engaged in Jewish life," Sable said.

"His passion for Israel was contagious, and he had a real influence on students and staff in promoting a love for Israel. He always led by example."

A graduate of the Har Etzion Yeshiva, Rabbi Don has been a teacher for 25 years. He was ordained by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, and earned a master's degree at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Rabbi Don, a religious Zionist, was employed by Israel's education ministry to integrate new educational technologies into Israel's religious state education system, Mamlachty Dati.



Family of Rabbi Ya'acov Don mourn during his funeral in Kfar Etzion, in the West Bank on Nov. 20. Rabbi Don a resident of Alon Shvut settlement was killed in a terrorist drive-by shooting in Gush Etzion. YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

"He touched a lot of people's lives inside and outside the classroom," Sable recalled.

"I remember being at a party for him when he was in his last year of his schlichut that students had thrown for him. One thing he said was that as schlichim who come from Israel to teach at Jewish day schools in North America, there is a lot of teaching inside the classroom and outside the classroom, but the most important lesson that he thought he could teach his students was that he would go home to Israel at the end of his schlichut... Going back to Israel, to his home, to the place he loved, was the most important lesson he would leave his students with."

Rabbi Shaul Feldman, the New York-based executive director of Bnei Akiva, a religious Zionist youth movement, knew Rabbi Don well, as he used to be a leader of one of Bnei Akiva's programs in Toronto during his time at TanenbaumCHAT.

"When he walked into a room, even if you were sad, your mood would change in a second. Always a smile. In Hebrew, you would say '*Mah nishma?*' He would have this smile ear to ear, with those words, '*Mah nishma?* The warmth of that individual... it's like he was born to be an educator, because he could connect to that warmth that he gave to those in his surroundings."

Rabbi Feldman also remembered feeling the love he had for his family.

"Seeing the way he was with his wife and kids, he was such a family person. His kids and his wife were so connected and he loved them. He was a wonderful, wonderful person."

Sable said he feels sad for Rabbi Don's family and the Jewish community as a whole.

"My first thoughts go out to his family, whom we knew well. His wife and children were part of the school community... Just feeling sad about them and their loss. He was not just a loss to the family, but a loss to the education community in Israel and to his extended family here," Sable said.

Rabbi Feldman said that with the seemingly endless and frequent attacks on Israeli citizens, it may be hard to connect to the loss.

"But the circles are getting closer and closer... You hear the news and it saddens you and you don't know the person, so it's sometimes harder to connect... We need to feel the pain for every individual, for everybody." ■

With files from Timesofisrael.com

Parole conditions remain, but Pollard can access Internet

JULIE WIENER AND RON KAMPEAS
JTA, WASHINGTON

His every move tracked by GPS, his computers monitored 24/7, his outings subject to a curfew, Jonathan Pollard will nonetheless for the first time be able to enjoy a 21st century indulgence so many others take for granted: surfing the Internet.

A filing by the convicted spy for Israel's lawyers reveal that they won a single concession from the U.S. government in months of wrangling over his parole conditions: Pollard, who will be employed by an investment firm, may access the Internet without prior permission.

The filing in the U.S. District Court in Manhattan last Friday just hours after Pollard's release from a federal prison in North Carolina 30 years into his life sentence, was for habeas corpus. Pollard's lawyers, Eliot Lauer and Jacques Semmelman, argued that the restrictions attached to Pollard amounted to illegal detention and were "statutorily and constitutionally impermissible."

The revelations in the contentious filing, along with statements Nov.20 by the White House, supportive Jews and Jewish groups and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, bury for now any hope Pollard's release would end three decades of pronounced disagreement between the United States and Israel over what Pollard represents and whether his punishment was just.

Pollard wants to make aliyah. Every signal the U.S. government has sent suggests that is not going to happen in the near term. The Justice Department has said it will stand by the conditions of Pollard's parole, which do not require a review for another two years. The White House has said, once again emphatically, that it will not intervene.

The U.S. Parole Commission, after announcing Pollard's pending release in July, issued parole conditions that would require Pollard to submit to GPS monitoring, obtain commission approval to access the Internet and agree to monitored computer use, with unannounced inspections of his equipment at any time, according to the filing by Pollard's lawyers.

The commission also said Pollard's probation officer could subject him to curfew and "exclusion zones," which would be in addition to the statutory requirement that Pollard request permission to travel outside the area of New York City, where he now will reside.

Pollard's lawyers appealed the conditions to the commission's appeals board, which removed only the need for the commission's approval to access the Internet. The GPS requirement was "reasonably related to the need to deter you from further criminal conduct," the appeals board said, although, according to the filing by Lauer and Semmelman, the board did not explain how

A poster calling for the release of Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard outside the Pollard family home in Jerusalem in July 2015. Jonathan Pollard was released on Nov. 21.
YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

Pollard, 30 years in prison, would be able to spy now that he's out.

The lawyers included statements from Robert "Bud" McFarlane, the national security adviser at the time of Pollard's 1985 arrest, and former Sen. Dennis DeConcini who was on the Senate Intelligence Committee at the time, that whatever classified information Pollard still knew is now useless.

The computer monitoring, the appeals board ruled, was warranted for home and business computers because "the boundaries between personal and business computer use are blurred." That requirement, Pollard's lawyers argue, will make it almost impossible for the Stanford University graduate to find work.

The Probation Office charged with monitoring Pollard's release "exacerbated the conditions," the filing said, apparently requiring Pollard to wear a tracking device. "GPS monitoring does not require a monitor attached to the body," the lawyers said and claimed that because of Pollard's diabetes, "any restraint place on his ankle or leg" would be dangerous.

A handful of Jewish organizations welcomed the release of Pollard, an American Jew and a former Navy intelligence analyst who pleaded guilty in 1987 to sharing classified information with Israel. A recurring theme was that the sentence was disproportionate.

"While we still believe his sentence was disproportionate, we hope that after having paid his debt to society, he should now be able to rebuild his life together with his wife," the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations said in a statement.

"As the Conservative Movement has iterated many times in the past, including in Rabbinical Assembly resolutions in 1992, 1994, 1995 and 2011, Jonathan Pollard was handed a remarkably unfair sentence," the Rabbinical Assembly's president, Rabbi William Gershon, said, adding that Pollard had suffered "decades of injustice." Also welcoming Pollard's release was the National Council of Young Israel, which took the lead among groups in advocating for Pollard's release.

Two groups, Agudath Israel of America and the Zionist Organization of America, called on the Obama administration to grant Pollard's wish to move to Israel.

That's unlikely. U.S. President Barack Obama does not have any plans to alter the terms of Pollard's parole now that he has been released, Ben Rhodes, the deputy national security adviser, said when asked by reporters about whether Netanyahu had asked Obama to release Pollard from parole.

"This is something that Prime Minister Netanyahu has regularly raised," Rhodes said. "The fact of the matter is, we have deferred to the Department of Justice and the process of justice with respect to the Jonathan Pollard issue."

The Justice Department indicated it will abide by the conditions of Pollard's parole. "The Department of Justice has always maintained that Jonathan Pollard should serve his full sentence for the serious crimes he committed," a spokesman said.

The disagreement over whether Pollard had committed "serious crimes" or was a well-meaning ideologue fretting over Israel's vulnerability has been the crux of one of the longest-standing tensions between the United States and Israel.

Netanyahu's statement on Pollard's release included nary a reference to any crimes. "As someone who raised Jonathan's case for years with successive American presidents, I had long hoped this day would come," he said. "After three long and difficult decades, Jonathan has been reunited with his family."

The Parole Commission may end Pollard's parole at any time but is not obliged to reconsider its terms for two years. After five years, Pollard must be released from his parole terms unless the commission has a compelling reason to keep him on probation.

Pollard appeared relaxed and pleased to be out of prison. Following his pre-dawn release from the federal prison in Butner, N.C., he traveled to New York City, where he checked in with his parole officer. The World Jewish Congress posted a photo of Pollard smiling serenely, seated in front of his wife, Esther.

At 9:09 a.m., a Twitter user posted a photo of the ex-spy with his wife and another man in the Lower East Side. He is looking, with apparent curiosity, at his wife's smartphone. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 26, 2015

Parisian Jews reconsider their future in France

CNAAN LIPHSHIZ
JTA.PARIS

French citizens light candles and place flowers outside Le Carillon bar in Paris, on Nov. 22 a few days after the terrorist attack.
SERGE ATTAL/FLASH90 PHOTO

Babette and Sasha Bergman lead what many would consider a charmed life.

Both Jewish high-tech professionals in their 30s – they met while working at Google's European headquarters in Ireland – the Bergmans settled in this capital city shortly ahead of the birth of their now four-year-old daughter, Daniella.

On weekends, they enjoy entertaining friends in their spacious apartment in the 17th arrondissement — an upscale and heavily Jewish district where the anti-Semitic incidents common throughout the rest of Paris are rare. Many Jews in the poorer quarters say this area is the ivory tower of upper-middle class French Jewry.

Living on a street with three synagogues and near many kosher shops, observing the Sabbath and keeping kosher is far easier in Paris, where some 350,000 Jews live, than it was when they were living in Dublin, says Sasha, who was born in Russia and grew up in the Netherlands.

But in the wake of the jihadist attacks that killed at least 130 in Paris on Nov. 13, even the Bergmans are finding it increasingly difficult to imagine a future for themselves in a country where Islamist terrorism and violence – including attacks that target the Jewish community – are putting wind into the sails of a rising far-right.

"I love this city, I love my country, but after the initial shock from the attacks and the pain, my first thought was regret that we decided to settle here," said Babette, who is Sephardi and grew up in Lyon. Two of her three sisters moved recently to Israel.

In January, soldiers with automatic rifles were posted regularly outside the Bergmans' building to guard an adjacent synagogue. It was a precaution taken following the slaying by Islamists of 12 people at the offices of the satirical *Charlie Hebdo* newspaper, followed by two other terrorist attacks, including one at a kosher supermarket, Hyper Cacher, in eastern Paris that killed four people. The supermarket attack came about three years after an Islamist killed three children and a rabbi at a Jewish school in Toulouse, France.

"We pass them by sometimes with Daniella," Babette said of the soldiers guarding Jewish institutions. "We're grateful, but it's not a normal way to live."

Two days after the deadly attack, Babette's family from Lyon and Israel gathered in Paris for a cousin's wedding at the historic Synagogue des Tournelles in the Marais, the city's historic Jewish district.

After the ceremony, the congregants left the synagogue quickly, mostly to make room for the next wedding – there were four Jewish wedding ceremonies planned there that day – but also because some guests said they felt uncomfortable gathering among groups of Jews at a time when terrorists believed to have been involved in the attacks are still at large.

"We're not too scared to come here and continue our lives as usual," said Ness Berros, a French Jew in his 20s who attended the wedding. "But we're too scared to feel exactly at ease right now."

The synagogue is under heavy guard by soldiers and police officers. Security was even tighter at another event the same day at the Synagogue de la Victoire, also known as the Grand Synagogue of Paris, at a ceremony honouring the victims of the Nov. 13 attacks. The road leading to that synagogue was cordoned off as the participants were patted down for concealed weapons.

Outside Jewish institutions, many of which had suspended their activities following the attacks, streets usually bustling with tourists and locals were much emptier than they otherwise would have been on a sunny Sunday afternoon in November.

Fears were just as pronounced outside the city, in its poorer suburbs, where tens of thousands of Jews live in close proximity to many Muslims – and where tensions often run high. Such neighbourhoods provided the majority of Paris-area Jews who immigrated to Israel last year, according to Jewish Agency figures. In total, 6,658 French Jews immigrated to Israel last year, more than triple the total number in 2012, according to Israel's Ministry of Immigrant Absorption.

In Pavillons-sous-Bois, a northeastern suburb, Sandra Sebbah, a Jewish mother of four, says the soldiers outside her children's Jewish school "might as well be cardboard cutouts" because "they won't stop an attack by the people with the kind of determination we saw." Sebbah said she cannot leave France because of her husband's work, but encourages her children to "live somewhere else, like normal people and not like this, where I am afraid every minute they're not home – especially when they're at school."

Meanwhile, many French Jews worry the attacks will strengthen the popularity of the National Front, a far-right, anti-immigrant party that French Jewish groups have largely shunned for the anti-Semitic track record of its founder, Jean-Marie Le Pen. His daughter, Marine Le Pen, the party's current leader, recently removed her father as the party's honorary president because of anti-Semitic statements he made that she called unacceptable.

In a poll conducted two weeks before the Paris attacks, Marine Le Pen emerged as an early favourite candidate in the 2017 presidential elections. Some 30 per cent of those polled said they would vote for her over the incumbent Socialist Party president, Francois Hollande, who would garner 19 per cent of the vote.

Back at the Bergmans' apartment in central Paris, Babette's father, Gerard, said the attacks reminded him of his childhood. A dentist in his 60s, he left Constantine, Algeria, in the 1960s amid a bloody civil war, in which local nationalists fought France for independence and each other for dominance. Gerald, who did not want his last name used, said his family narrowly survived a bombing outside their home because they were at a restaurant when the explosive detonated.

"Now it seems to me the same barbarians are coming to drive me and my family once again, this time out of France itself," said Babette's father, adding he will probably leave for Israel within the next few years.

His wife, Jacqueline, who was born in Morocco, said she believes the war in Algeria may have traumatized her husband.

"I had a very different childhood in Casablanca," she recalled. "When we talk about coexistence, I know it's possible because I lived it, with neighbours, Arabs and Muslims, living together, acknowledging each other's holidays."

Still, Jacqueline said, she also sees no future for Jews in France.

"Something happened in the 1990s, a bad wind started blowing from the outside," she said in reference to hateful sermons and jihadist propaganda that began to spread through satellite television and continue to be disseminated online. "We didn't have this external influence, poisoning everything in its wake."

After the wedding celebration, a visibly tired Sasha puts Daniella to sleep and prepares to drive for an hour and a half to a university campus in Fontainebleau, where he is completing an executive MBA program.

The master's degree, he says, may be important for his young family's future.

Besides, he adds, "It's so peaceful out in the countryside."■

ANALYSIS

The new normal: stabbings, shootings and lulls

Avi Issacharoff
JERUSALEM

The minute we felt a lull in the current violence, the terror attacks last Thursday shattered that illusion.

Nov. 19 was the deadliest day since the outbreak of violence, or in Palestinian terms, the so-called "third intifadah." Five killed (including former CHAT teacher Rabbi Ya'acov Don) and another five injured in two separate attacks.

In the first attack, 36-year-old Raid Halil bin Mahmoud, from the Palestinian village of Dura near Hebron, exploited his Israeli work permit and killed two Israelis in what appears to be the first attack carried out by a Palestinian work permit holder inside the Green Line. The second attack of the day was a combined shooting and car-ramming attack, and ended with heavy losses, with two Israelis and a Palestinian bystander killed.

On Nov. 21, a 13-year-old girl was among four people stabbed in a terror attack in the southern Israeli city of Kiryat Gat.

And on Sunday 21-year-old Hadar Burchris from Safed was killed in the Gush Etzion Junction, the same place as the Nov. 19 attacks.

After almost two weeks of relative calm which saw a decrease in the number of stabbing attacks, we have seen an increase in shootings attacks.

While some young Palestinian men and women have approached IDF checkpoints in the southern West Bank city armed with knives, bent on attacks, in at least three other incidents the would-be attackers threw their weapons to the ground and expressed their desire to die.

So how do we explain the calm on one hand and the fresh upsurge on the other?

On one hand, pressure exerted by Israeli security forces in the West Bank, and the practice of demolishing the homes of attackers, has made it difficult for young attackers to carry out their plans.

On the other hand however, it's impossible to completely eradicate the motivation to murder Israelis. The sentiment exists, and is unlikely to disappear in the foreseeable future.

So despite the sporadic periods of calm, the new reality in the West Bank and its "third intifadah" appears to dictate that attacks will not stop completely. This would seem to be the untenable new normal.

On the morning of Nov.19, when bin Mahmoud decided to carry out the attack on the Panorama office building in Tel Aviv, his hometown of Hebron was quiet, at least in the H-2 area under Israeli control. Perhaps an artificial quiet, but quiet nonetheless. Two weeks ago, Hebron native Shadi Ahmad Matua opened fire on the Litman family near the Otniel Junction, and the week before, Jewish worshipers en route to the Cave of the Patriarchs were shot at by Palestinians.

In Hebron's famous, once busy market, part of which is under Israeli control, only a handful of stores have been able to stay afloat.

When asked, one local business owner, Khader Shabaneh, told the *Times of Israel* the reason behind the lull in stabbing attacks: "We don't want a mess, we just want the army to ease up on us a little bit."

Shabaneh, who owns a bakery adjacent to the Tomb of the Patriarchs, said that he and some of the other shopkeepers nearby had begun stopping young Palestinians in the street they suspect could be planning a terror attack.

Shabaneh said that recently when he saw children throwing rocks at Israeli security forces by his bakery, he approached them and told them to stop and explained to them that clashing with the IDF would result in a lock down of the neighbourhood and be bad for business. "But I was trembling in fear that the soldiers would shoot at me, thinking that I was one of them," he said.

He said that IDF soldiers' lack of Arabic compounded the problem.

"Only recently there were Arabic-speaking troops stationed here, and they treated local residents with respect," he said.

The lull in stabbings is at least partly a result of the co-operation of PA forces and local businessmen.

In light of the uptick in violence, many family dynamics have changed, an IDF officer said, and parents are increasingly monitoring what their children are doing.

This could also be seen an effort to restore a sense of order to the traditional family unit, which has been weakened in Palestinian society.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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ANALYSIS

No early warning of attacks

The scene at Gush Etzion Junction attack on Nov. 19. MAGEN DAVID ADOM SPOKESMAN/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

According to the same IDF official, after fatally shooting Rabbi Yaakov Litman and his son Netanel last week, Matua returned home and told several family members what he had done.

"When his father found out about it, he went to Hazayit intersection, approached a soldier patrolling there and explained to him that his son carried out the attack," he said.

Why would a father turn in his own son? Turns out, the father is a local businessman who realized the implications the incident would have on the family, and chose to give up his son for the sake of the family rather than pay the price for his son's actions.

One of the biggest problems facing the IDF and Shin Bet in this new model of an intifadah is the lack of intelligence pointing to the intentions of would-be Palestinian attackers.

"None of the recent attackers from the Hebron area was known to the security establishment," the officer said. "In fact, we don't have anyone on our watch list currently.

"One of the attackers who carried out an attack near the Tomb of the Patriarchs was sitting in a nearby Internet cafe where he wrote a farewell message to his friends and family, asking for their forgiveness, but explained that he 'had to act,'" he said. "Five minutes later, he walked out and attempted to stab soldiers. We have no early warning indicators here."

The official said the impromptu attacks by young Palestinians were much harder to combat than those organized by known terror groups.

"Actually, activities that take place within the terrorism infrastructure are more straightforward for us, because when a threat emerges we can make arrests," he said.

In recent days soldiers stationed in the area have seen a new troubling trend: young Palestinians coming to die at Israeli checkpoints. They don't attempt to mount an attack, but simply show soldiers that they are carrying knives in the apparent hope that the troops will shoot them dead.

When the captured young suspects were asked their motivations, many said they just wished to end their lives. Most of them struggled with psychological or social issues.

Although Tel Aviv terrorist bin Mahmoud had a permit to work inside Israel, and although the government subsequently froze the entry of hundreds of permit-holders, it's unlikely that it will halt the daily influx of ten of thousands of Palestinian workers as a punitive measure. Such a move would escalate tensions, not abate them.

In the West Bank, especially in Hebron, it's not only the IDF, some Palestinians and PA security forces are attempting to restore calm. In recent days, Jewish residents of nearby settlements have posted notices informing Palestinian residents of armed community patrols in an effort to prevent future attacks.

It's unclear if this a publicity stunt or a genuine emerging phenomenon in mixed Jewish-Arab areas of the West Bank.

"Most of the Jewish settlers in the main blocks are supportive and willing to help," the IDF officer said.

Still, he said, "they have their own demands. For example, now, there's a campaign to close Route 60 to Palestinian motorists, and that's probably not going to happen."

In response to reports of the armed patrols of Jewish settlers, IDF Col. Yariv Ben Ezra, commander of the Judea district, said any IDF weapons discovered on the civilian patrols would be confiscated by security forces.

The IDF official said the army was trying to avoid friendly fire incidents, saying "If they want to patrol in their cars without taking action, then by all means yes. But we cannot have people taking action with weapons on their own. It could end in a disaster." ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

OPINION

How to counteract the EU's labelling decision

Dr. Michael Gordon

> *Maybe the time has come for us to alter our collective buying habits*

Jews around the world have fought heroically against the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign, a movement meant to undermine the legitimacy and survival of Israel. In this battle, we have had some wonderful non-Jewish allies, including London Mayor Boris Johnson, who scoffed that, "the supporters of this so-called boycott are really just corduroy-jacketed academics that have no real standing on the matter and I think are highly unlikely to be influential on Britain," as well as some politicians in the United States who have promoted legislation to make BDS illegal.

Now, the European Union (EU) has decided to label products produced in the West Bank, the Golan and east Jerusalem, on the basis that Europeans should be informed about products that come from what has been deemed "illegally occupied" land. Israel has been singled out despite the fact that many other places in the world having seriously egregious issues with true illegal occupation.

The EU ambassador to Israel, Lars Faaborg-Andersen, a Danish diplomat, claims the decision is not political, but merely a "technical" matter. He seemed almost insulted that some Israelis might equate or see a connection to the Holocaust experience of Jewish "labelling." To add massive insult to economic and political injury, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom recently stated that the recent ISIS attacks on Paris were partially fuelled by Palestinian frustration. "To counteract the radicalization," she told a TV audience, "we must go back to the situation such as the one in the Middle East of which not the least the Palestinians see that there is no future: we must either accept a desperate situation or resort to violence."

So, what can Canadian Jews do about all this?

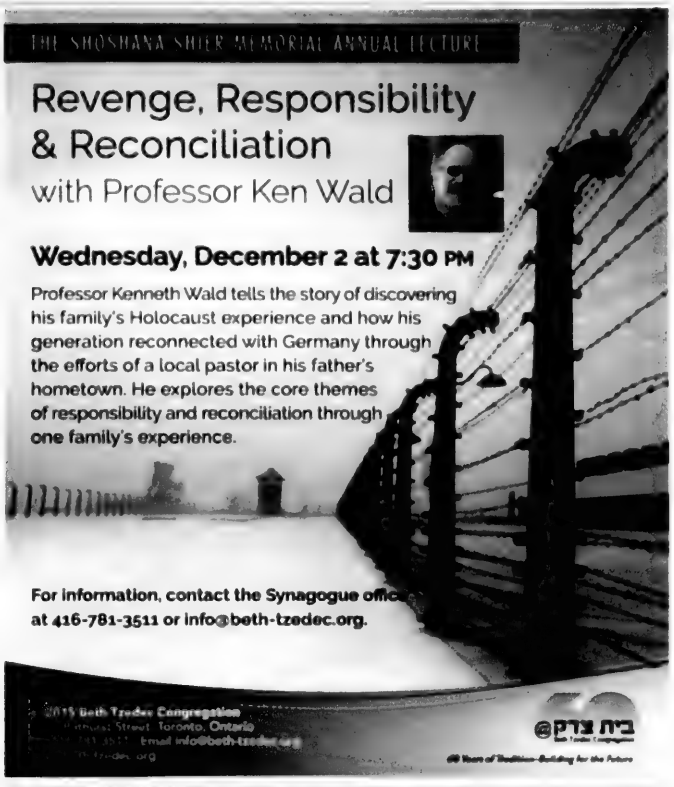
Maybe the time has come for us to alter our collective buying habits. Perhaps we might consider eschewing products from those EU countries which believe labelling products as coming from the "illegal settlements" is merely a "technical issue." We could let all the retail providers of such EU-produced products know that we will not buy them because of the policy of their corporate and political masters – lobbying, in essence, one customer at a time. Sending letters to corporate headquarters informing them of our plans will do as well.

There are, for example, many carmakers that produce products as good as – and a lot cheaper than – Sweden's Volvo. Likewise, there are many furniture outlets that provide quality and relatively inexpensive furniture other than Ikea. There are many cheeses to chose from other than Danish blue and havarti. And there is lox to top bagels and cream cheese other than Norwegian. We might consider replacing these products with first-class Canadian items made by quality manufacturers from British Columbia to Nova Scotia and everywhere in between.

Of course, it will be important to determine which of the EU countries will follow through with this labelling decision before deciding on which products and which countries to avoid purchasing from. At present, Germany has declined to participate, as has Hungary. Of course, in the face of the Paris attacks, one might think that labelling the source of hummus might take a back seat in the grand scheme of priorities.

Maybe that is wishful thinking, but imagine the look on the Volvo dealer's face when a previous customer drives up in a Toyota and says, "I will not ever buy a Volvo again, nor will anyone in my family because of the comments of the Swedish foreign minister about the root of the Paris ISIS attack."

We have power in numbers, creativity and determination. Let's use it. ■


THE SHOSHANA SHIER MEMORIAL ANNUAL LECTURE
Revenge, Responsibility & Reconciliation
with Professor Ken Wald
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Professor Kenneth Wald tells the story of discovering his family's Holocaust experience and how his generation reconnected with Germany through the efforts of a local pastor in his father's hometown. He explores the core themes of responsibility and reconciliation through one family's experience.
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בית צדק

Baycrest Health Sciences recognizes the contributions of
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Through the support of her devoted husband, David Shiffman, Edna continued to honour her father's vision by helping to create the David and Edna Shiffman Family Neighbourhood. A comfortable, dignified space for residents and their loved ones to share meaningful time together, the Shiffman Family Neighbourhood has transformed the care environment at Baycrest.
Baycrest extends its heartfelt condolences to the entire family of Edna Shiffman.
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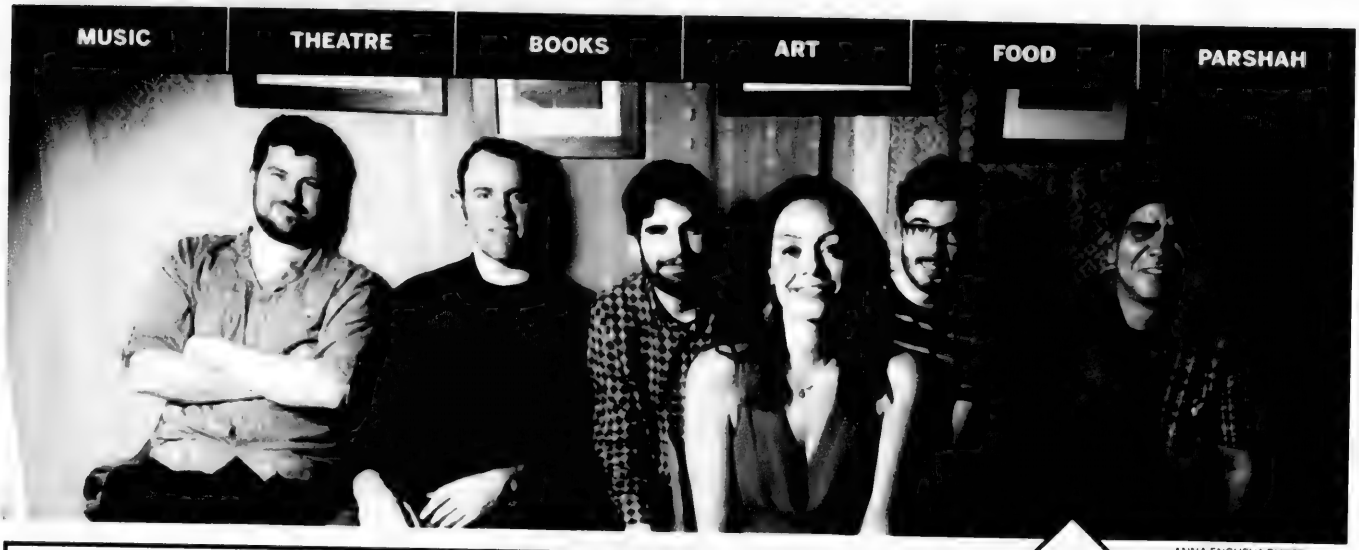
Jewish Life



ANNA ENCHEVA PHOTO

Brazilian-born sisters reunite to perform in Toronto

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Aline Morales left her native Brazil to settle in Toronto in 2003, she realized that many Canadians thought Brazilian music was limited to the samba and the bossa nova. Morales, a drummer, percussionist and composer, brought maracatu drumming and dancing, an Afro-Brazilian performance genre, to the city.

"The concept that people had here of Brazilian music, it was kind of a stereotype of just samba and bossa nova. Nobody had ever heard of maracatu, and then I started to teach, and I still do," Morales said.

A traditional maracatu performance includes a troupe of drummers, a singer, a chorus, dancers and stock characters, along with a king and queen. In Brazil, Morales performed with one of the country's best-known maracatu groups, Naçao Estrela Brilhante do Recife. "Maracatu is an old tradition in Brazil, an oral tradition, something you can't learn in school," Morales said.

Morales' Toronto-based percussion troupe of up to 35 participants, Baque de Bamba, performed at Panamania Live at Nathan Phillips Square and the Summerworks Block Party this past summer, has led parades through Kensington Market and was featured in an Ontario Tourism "There's No Place Like This" television commercial.

Aline Morales pictured top with her band and above pictured with her sister Jabu, right.

Morales released a debut solo album, *Flores, Tambores e Amores*, in 2011. A change of pace from maracatu, the Juno-nominated CD is rooted in samba, forró, northeastern Brazilian folk music and 1960s tropicalia, although the maracatu influence still comes through. "It's a little more mellow, not so loud as a drumming group can be," Morales said.

Before she moved to Canada, Morales performed regularly with her sister, Jabu, a singer and songwriter. The two women are now separated by an ocean. Jabu has been living in Barcelona since 2008. She's established herself as a performing artist there, with her own band, the Maracatu Mandacaru drumming troupe, and with the all-female ensemble Tambor de Saia. Jabu is launching her second CD, *Malungo*, in Toronto, and Morales will join her on stage at the Lula Lounge at the end of November.

Malungo was recorded in Barcelona with Portuguese and English lyrics. Aline helped Jabu write one of the two English tracks on the album, *Heirs*, a song about having children. The two women are mothers, and a remarkable coincidence surrounds the birth of their children.

"We got pregnant in the same year," Aline said, adding that both she and her sister have twins who are now nearly three years old. Also on the theme of motherhood is the track *Libran*, on which Jabu sings in Portuguese about an African-Brazilian goddess who represents motherhood.

With its African and Brazilian musical influences, Jabu's CD is a reflection of Barcelona, the multicultural city it was recorded in, Aline said.

"You can tell Jabu is living in a place that is multicultural, a little bit like Toronto."■

Aline and Jabu Morales' one-night Toronto appearance will include local musicians on drums, keyboards, guitar, bass and a Brazilian guitar called the cabuco, along with lots of percussion. The sisters perform at the Lula Lounge, 1585 Dundas St. W., Toronto, on Nov. 26. Doors open at 9 p.m. and show time is 10 p.m. Tickets are $10 in advance at umanota.ca or $15 at the door. You can listen to Malungo *on soundcloud at https://soundcloud.com/jabumorales, and it will be available for download on iTunes. For more information about maracatu, visit www.baquedebamba.com or contact Aline Morales through Facebook.*

A play about the writing life

DOROTHY LICHTBLAU
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Initially, *Seminar* may seem yet another story about the effect a tough, arrogant yet potentially enlightening teacher has on his students. It is that. However, centrally, this smart comedy crafted by an astute writer, is about the writing life.

Pulitzer Prize nominee, playwright, author and screenwriter, Theresa Rebeck offers a harsh yet affectionately comedic rendering of young literary aspirants intent on success. In just 90 minutes Rebeck takes audiences on a wild ride with five noteworthy individuals who get caught in a gamut of entanglements due to their common passion for the written word. She then brings everyone home chuckling about what he/she has learned on the trip. Amazingly, the journey mostly takes place in the living room of one of the seminar participants.

The first scene begins mid conversation. Izzy (Grace Lynn Kung), Martin (Nathan Howe), Douglas (Ryan James Miller) and Kate (Andrea Houssin), four aspiring 20-something writers, are verbally strutting and sparring while waiting for Leonard (Tom McCamus), the famous novelist whom they've each paid $5,000 for a 10-week master class. All the young writers have demonstrated some talent. Now, each is looking to Leonard to push them toward success though each apprentice spells the S word differently.

Izzy is a highly confident and pragmatic young woman who is sexually available for fun or benefit. She is more interested in fame than profundity. Douglas, an Ivy Leaguer with schlep, is a nice guy who can be tiresome and pompous. Martin, the poorest of the bunch, is also the most protective of his work. For him writing is close to a calling. Yet, he isn't ready to expose his work to a reader. A well-heeled Bennington grad, Kate is bright and a self-proclaimed feminist, who is mired in the past vis à vis her family and her writing. She wants to be validated and liked. The seminar is being held at her posh Upper West side Manhattan apartment.

Each of the young actors offers a solid and lively performance. Together, they are a tight ensemble.

When Leonard arrives, the energy in the room changes. He is a man with large appetites and no hesitancy about satisfying them. His non-altruistic mission is to blast open his students' notions about powerful writing and literary accomplishment. His methods are brutal. Without compunction he spews brilliant but scathing remarks about the novices' work and cutting assessments of their characters. Even his praise raises the fear of a price to pay. After a couple of sessions with the unrelenting Leonard, the students are about ready to jump ship. But they don't. Instead, while Leonard is away on a foreign assignment, they go madly off in diverse directions.

The cast of *Seminar* is a tight ensemble. DYLAN HEWLETT PHOTO

McCamus' Leonard wonderfully elicits fear and loathing yet doesn't alienate the audience. In control of Leonard's enormous personality, McCamus capably reveals the many aspects of this complex character. As the play progresses McCamus adds another piece to the Leonard puzzle. He won't submit to defeat, he is self-undermining, he is insightful, he is gripped by narcissism and at bottom, like his students, he is passionate about writing.

My guess is that Rebeck is too. In between the lines of a satisfying story, she laughingly warns us about the literary life. Her tips aren't astounding but worth reviewing. A writer's life is hard, the pay is poor, there is no guarantee of success and even if you gain wide reputation it often is short-lived.

Why do it? Go see *Seminar*. ■

Mirvish Productions presents Seminar *by Theresa Rebeck, directed by Stewart Arnott. Running at Panasonic Theatre until Dec.6. www.mirvish.com*

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 26, 2015

Confessions of a reformed leftie

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Ottawa music producer and political activist Fred Litwin has been "out" for decades, not only as a gay man, but as a proud and articulate Conservative who prefers to be a "free thinker" rather than be fashionably left on a spectrum of important political causes.

In his new book, *Conservative Confidential: Inside the Fabulous Blue Tent*, Litwin walks us through his political conversion to Conservatism after becoming gravely disillusioned with the left shortly after 9/11.

Litwin is founder of Ottawa's news-making Free Thinking Film Society. He's also the architect of a gay-friendly wing of the Conservative Party of Canada whose social gatherings inside the "fabulous blue tent" at Conservative conventions were famously popular during the Stephen Harper era.

Now as an author, he's manufactured a cogent and compelling rebuttal of modern leftist politics in Canada, America and the liberal West. Litwin writes with a strong voice: international commentator Daniel Pipes described his book as "an eloquent mix of the personal and the global."

The point of no return in Litwin's conversion came shortly after 9/11, when he began encountering interpretations that the catastrophe was all America's fault. The *Toronto Star*'s Haroon Siddiqui, for example, asserted that the attacks occurred because America was "indifferent to the suffering of too many peoples, from Afghanistan to Chechnya to the Middle East... thus driving the ordinary folk there to seethe in silence against America and the crazed ones into fanatical acts."

Then he looked at Noam Chomsky's book on 9/11: "It was all typical Chomsky – bash Israel, bash American foreign policy, blame the United States for Al Qaeda, condemn the United States as a terrorist state – all 21st-century regurgitations from the 1960s. I sighed and put the book back. I was done with the left."

In bringing out all the usual suspects, the book presents a worthwhile rehash of many great and embarrassing moments in Canadian and global politics, including some we may have forgotten.

Remember when Prime Minister Jean Chrétien seemed to blame America in an interview with the CBC on the first anniversary of 9/11? "You cannot exercise your powers to the point of humiliation for the others," Chrétien said. "That is what the western world – not only the Americans, the western world – has to realize. Because they are human beings too. There are long-term consequences."

Or how about Liberal MP Carolyn Parrish complaining to an Egyptian newspaper about the "influence of the Jewish lobby" in Canada, cursing our neighbours to the south ("Damn Americans, I hate those bastards") and stomping on a George W. Bush proxy-voodoo doll?

These are not just blasts from the past, of course. Some of these fringe Liberal attitudes may again resurface in Justin Trudeau's majority Liberal government. Indeed, isn't the historic Liberal insistence on Canada's role as "honest broker" in the Middle East really just a smokescreen to apportion a disproportionate dollop of blame on Israel and the West?

Litwin also reminds us that Justin Trudeau's brother and advisor, Alexandre Trudeau, is a rabble-rousing filmmaker whose 2012 documentary, *The New Great Game*, defended Iran's nuclear weapons program while vilifying Israel. The film, which ran on the CBC, was produced in co-operation with Press TV, the Iranian state-owned broadcaster.

Litwin had his own run-in with the Iranians in 2011 over plans by his Free Thinking Film Society to screen *Iranium*, a film that deals with the brutality of the Iranian regime and its covert quest for nuclear weapons. A complaint from the Iranian Embassy initially compelled Library and Archives Canada (LAC), where Litwin had booked a theatre, to cancel the screening.

After the press got hold of the story, however, LAC decided to allow the screening after all, but protests and threats forced closure of the building. Thanks to all the publicity generated, the film was eventually shown to a capacity crowd in a different venue. Canada ultimately sent a diplomatic note to Iran that stated, "Canada is a free country and freedom of expression is a core value that won't be compromised."

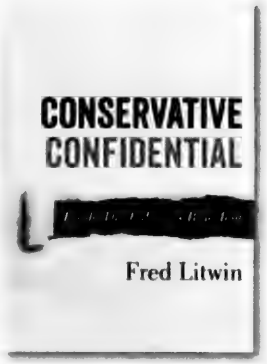
Similarly, when the Free Thinking Film Society scheduled a screening of the film *Obsession*, which traces the rise of radical Islam and its incitement to global jihad, a complaint from an Ottawa professor prompted a cancellation and much publicity – the film ultimately attracted a sold-out house in another venue.

Litwin also showed the film *Reclaiming Our Pride* by Toronto lawyer Martin Gladstone, which protested the inclusion of QuAIA ("Queers Against Israeli Apartheid") in the Toronto Gay Pride parade. Litwin points out that Uzma Shakir, the city official who decided the term "Israeli apartheid" was not discriminatory, had a serious undeclared bias. Shakir, Toronto's director of equity, diversity and human rights, had previously demonstrated antipathy towards Israel and was a regular contributor to Rabble.ca, the media sponsor of Israel Apartheid Week.

Another local institution – the CBC – also comes under Litwin's scrutiny as he targets a bevy of producers, commentators and hosts (including Tony Berman, Avi Lewis, Jian Ghomeshi, Eric Margolis, and Robert Fisk) who were famously antagonistic to Israel. But he rises to the defence of Harper's Conservatives over the left's false presumption that the Conservatives had a hidden agenda to fight a holy war against gay rights.

"By 2015, I'd already spent nine years in the enemy camp, and I'd never even heard any war drums," he writes. "I found no anti-gay war rooms, and for most of those years, I'd been a completely 'out' gay Conservative."

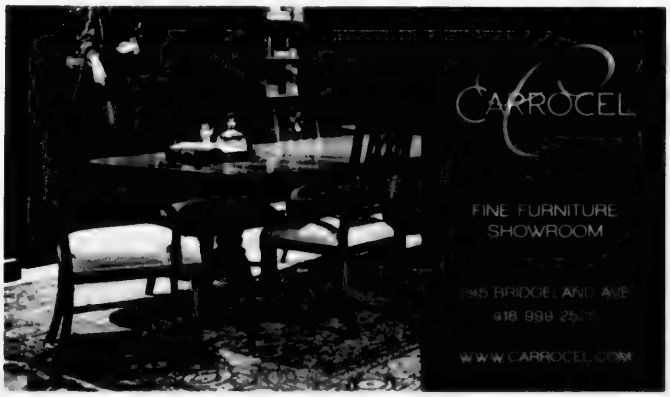
Don't let the word "Conservative" in the title fool you into supposing the book is past its "best before" date. With a Liberal majority government now enshrined in Ottawa, issues raised in *Conservative Confidential* now seem more relevant and cautionary than ever. ■



Conservative Confidential: Inside The Fabulous Blue Tent
by Fred Litwin

NorthernBlues Books

> *The book presents a worthwhile rehash of many great and embarrassing moments in Canadian politics.*



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Kids' entertainers make the world go round

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Lisa Sonshine and Brock Burford, better known as Sonshine & Broccoli, have been singing their way into Canadian children's hearts for 11 years.

Singer Sonshine is full of light and excitement with a jubilant personality to which her fans, kids ages two to 10, gravitate.

Burford's childhood nickname of "Broccoli" stuck, and pretty much describes the singer/guitarist's playful demeanour.

Following the successes of *Sonshine and Broccoli Jam* in 2004, and their second album *Feel The Beat* in 2009, the duo recently launched their third children's album *It's A Beautiful Day*.

The album is a collection of 12 songs ranging in style from rock to pop to bluegrass, including a gospel song.

"Kindie Pop and Kindie Rock is a new wave of writing for children's music where adults, as well as kids, can listen. If you took the children's lyrics out, it would be a pop song you would hear on the radio," explained Burford. "On this album we wanted to expand our story-telling skills, elaborating on themes of conquering your fears and freedom of expression."

Lisa Sonshine and Brock Burford

> *If you took the children's lyrics out, it would be a pop song you would hear on the radio.*

With songs such as *Making a Fort, Wave Hello, Sing It Out, The Painter, Rock Paper Scissors, Time Travel Song,* and *Try Something New*, one can't help but anticipate where the lyrics will lead.

"My favourite song on the album is *Music Makes the World Go Round*. It contains both melodies and crossover melodies, where Lisa is singing one part and I am singing another part, and we harmonize together but in different rhythms. I like the song structure and the melody and I love the music. It has a beautiful flow and the message is what I like most: music does make the world go round and it connects everyone together," Burford said.

Fresh out of the musical theatre program at Sheridan College, Sonshine saw herself headed to Broadway, while Burford aspired to be a rock star.

Nevertheless, life had other ideas.

One day Lisa, was asked to lead a sing-a-long mom-and-tot music class.

"I called Brock, who was my best friend, and asked if he could help me out. We wrote *The Welcome Song* and *The Goodbye Song*," said Sonshine.

"I always responded well to kids and Lisa was a child whisperer. It capitulated from there," added Burford.

Touring across Ontario this summer, Sonshine & Broccoli performed some 50 shows. One show in particular left a huge impact on the performers.

"We did a show at Camp Aim, a therapeutic camp for children. We rocked out so hard it became a big dance party. The counsellors got these kids out of their chairs and some even out of their wheelchairs. It was one of the best shows we have ever done. The energy was over the top. I left Camp Aim knowing that music is a universal language.

"We were so inspired from our performance at Camp Aim that we penned *Music Makes the World Go Round* that night," said Sonshine.

What's next for Sonshine & Broccoli?

"We have submitted *It's a Beautiful Day* to the Junos and are hoping for a Juno nomination, if not a Juno award. We will continue building our brand, touring, and working on getting a television show," Sonshine said. ■

Sonshine & Broccoli will be performing songs from their newest album It's A Beautiful Day *at Associated Hebrew Schools Chanukah party on Nov. 29; Temple Sinai Chanukah party on Dec. 12 and performing at Kidstock Feb. 7, with proceeds going to Chai Lifeline. Visit: www.sonshineandbroccoli.com*

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From emerging artists to emerging elders

Evelyn Tauben

Refreshingly, there has been a rise in the number of initiatives dedicated to fostering Jewish creativity and innovation, informing more vibrant Jewish conversations and communities.

These excellent holistic programs, mostly retreats and multi-stage incubators, are aimed almost exclusively at young people. Although I count (for the next three years and one month) as a young person, I wonder about the value of this staunch demographic focus.

Tent seminars, a fabulous new program of the Yiddish Book Center in Massachusetts, are one-week intensives hosted in various cities that have explored creative writing, food, museums, comedy and fashion. As their website states, these immersive, free workshops are "for anyone who's curious about the connections between Jewishness and modern culture." Anyone, that is, in their 20s.

Most projects cast a slightly wider net aimed at Jews in their 20s and 30s, including PresenTense, a social entrepreneurship incubator in over 15 cities internationally, and the ROI Summit, a global gathering in Israel of change-makers and community-builders. Closer to home, ProMontreal has supported young entrepreneurs under 40 for 15 years, and Toronto's new Centre for Jewish Innovation, Genesis, equally concentrates on mentorship for young adults – though director, Alana Kayfetz, acknowledges that its focus is more about stage of life than a strict age cap.

Based in New York, Asylum Arts is another visionary, nascent project framed as "a global network for Jewish culture" that convenes retreats in international locations for essential cultural conversations and professional support. They focus on "artists within the emerging spectrum," which, as director Rebecca Guber notes, "means different things within various international contexts," while conceding that the average age of participants is 33.

Many of my colleagues have passed into the no-man's land of their 40s between the revered emerging artist or young entrepreneur and the so-called established professional. No longer worthy of support, they are assumed to have achieved clarity of vision and self-sufficiency at the magic age of 41.

What happens to those launching a startup at 49 or creating a genre-bending performance at 62? How do they receive support for a Jewish project from the Jewish community upon graduating from young adulthood? How do they "develop new relationships with an international Jewish artist community, develop needed skills to advance their careers, and delve deeply into their own Jewish identity within a creative context," as Asylum retreats offer participants?

Granted, I have benefited from outreach efforts to younger Jews, which give us a voice and a like-minded cohort. I have also been the staffer charged with developing "cool programs" for young adults (largely the impetus for Tent, as academic director Joshua Lambert explained to me). Ultimately though, I found that separating the young from the young-at-heart was a false dichotomy, counter to the larger goal of connecting people with Jewish culture, and with each other.

People of all ages come together at the KlezKanada Laurentian Retreat in Lantier, Que. to discover and create Yiddish and Jewish culture. AVIA MOORE PHOTO

The projects mentioned here are not misguided, but they are missing an essential aspect of Jewish life: intergenerational transmission. At the annual KlezKanada summer retreat in the Laurentians, the very young to the very old gather to celebrate Yiddish and Jewish culture. While the multi-aged faculty are experts, the learning is not just top-down. Seasoned artists are exposed to experimental practices as much as the "young people" are trained in traditional modes. Unmatched collaborations form across generations. Participants are connected to the spectrum of the community, not just the segment primed for procreation.

As we witness more seniors creating and innovating well into their advanced years, as well as people launching second and third careers, I hope to see more projects that are as conscious of developing intergenerational spaces and opportunities for not-so-young creatives as of targeting young adults. Let's take our lead from Kohelet, 11:6: "In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not hold back." Cultivating the creativity solely of those in the morning of life holds back the potential of those evening (and mid-life) years that are ripe for the picking. ■

Originally from Montreal, Evelyn Tauben is a writer, producer and curator based in Toronto.

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Taxing Times | Year-end planning

As December approaches remember, make all donations before December 31 to get credit for 2015. Offset capital gains with capital losses. The last trading day is December 24.

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Windsor's water-themed event inspired by Tashlich

Opening night crowd gathers at *Water* juried art show.

Curators Gabrielle and Juan Javier Pescador with donor Sue Selby.

David Robins and Sharon Strosberg with the Charles Pachter print they purchased.

RON STANG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, WINDSOR

This city's Jewish community is aging and to some extent in need of revitalization and reaching out to the community around it.

That's why the Windsor Jewish Community Centre this month has taken on a unique approach to engaging both with its own members and the wider public with its *Water* event, which includes a juried art exhibit, as well as symphony and dance performances.

Inspired by Tashlich, the Rosh Hashanah ritual of "casting off" sins and seeking renewal by symbolically throwing bread or food into a body of water, *Water* was also meant to be symbolic of the Windsor area, since the city is on the Detroit River and much of its identity comes from the river and the Great Lakes.

Windsor-born Gabrielle Pescador (née Bernstein), a multimedia artist now living literally across that river outside Detroit, and who came up with the "water" theme, said the river is "very unique" to the city and was influential in her growing up here. "It was a very important feature of my childhood memories," she said.

Pescador's family also happened to play a significant role in building the city's landmark shul, the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue, in 1929.

"Water is a very significant symbol in art and in spiritual traditions as a cleanser, a transformer, as something representing the transitory nature of life or the creative process, or God, or the sacred," she said.

She and her husband, Javier, also an artist, decided that a juried art exhibition, which includes submissions of various media – from paintings to sculpture, video and sound – from artists across North America could explore and express this theme. "It had a lot of potential for artists to react to," she said.

The transcendent show had relevance to the religious and non-religious, Jew and non-Jew.

"Some people responded to it from a Jewish perspective, and some people were spiritual, some people were more connected to nature. We got a really wide response, which is really what we wanted. We wanted the show to not have one note," Pescador said.

Besides the art show, *Water* was kicked off by a performance of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra performing, appropriately enough, Handel's *Water Music*. There was also a performance by a local contemporary and non-Jewish dance group, HNM Dance Company, which has its studio in the JCC.

Pescador said the event allowed Windsor Jews to define themselves anew.

"The Windsor Jewish community is an aging community, and I think that the Jewish community in itself doesn't have to define itself by the old guard necessarily," she said, noting there's a whole new generation that could be inspired by events like this.

Water even delved into contemporary issues. Pescador said the Detroit River Canadian Cleanup Committee showed a film. "They were excited to have a multi-layered experience with respect to the river and how important water is to people."

Ronna Warsh, chair of the JCC board, said her organization has sought program renewal, in part sparked by its successful annual film festival, which is more than a decade old and attracts a Jewish and non-Jewish audience.

"It seemed pretty clear to us that cultural events were something that might attract people," she said.

Moreover, Warsh said some of the more recent programming was "routine or somewhat stale and unappealing, so you always have to change up what you're doing." ■

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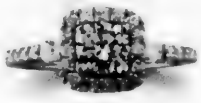

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Top musicians pay tribute to Ray Jessel

CJN STAFF

A host of music notables will pay tribute on Nov. 30 to Temple Sinai's first music director Ray Jessel, the Canadian composer and performer whom singer Michael Feinstein hailed as "the millenium's Noel Coward."

Jessel died last July at age 85, leaving a legacy of music that runs the gamut from Broadway musicals, accomplished classical compositions and chart-topping love songs from his TV days in Hollywood, to some of the cabaret world's most brilliantly funny ditties. Strangely, he gained notoriety just over a year ago when he auditioned for the hit TV show *America's Got Talent*.

"I learned so much from Ray," says singer Jackie Richardson, who will share the stage with performers including Theresa Tova, as well as Pam Hyatt and Lorraine Foreman, for whom Jessel wrote material in his early days before he was swooped up by partner Marion Grudeff to write the music for the Broadway show *Baker Street*.

Jazz FM's Jaymz Bee first fell in love with Jessel's work at New York's Birdland. Jaymz will sing the song that brought Jessel worldwide notoriety at 84 when he performed his composition *What She's Got* on NBC's *America's Got Talent*, which will be forever be fondly remembered as *The Penis Song*.

Ori Dagan, recent winner of Best Jazz Vocals Award at the Toronto International Music Awards, will sing Jessel's *Hellzapoppin'*, which was a chart-topping hit for Louis Armstrong soon after it premiered in the musical of the same name at Expo '67 in Montreal. Jessel's wistful love song *I'm Alright Now*, popularized by John Pizzarelli on his *New Classics* recording, will be sung at this show by Sam Broverman.

Ray Jessel

Other areas of Jessel's musical brilliance will be illustrated in Morry Kernerman's presentation of an excerpt from *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, which Kernerman commissioned, which was premiered on CBC, and with a trio of *Baker Street* songs sung by Robert Missen, Allison Arends and David Warrack, including Richard Burton's top-of-the-chart's hit, *A Married Man*. ■

Remembering Ray Jessel, 8 p.m. Nov. 30, The Performing Arts Lodges Toronto, 110 The Esplanade. Suggested donation $20 will aid PAL Future (tax receipts available). Advance tickets 416-603-0625

Anne Frank's father added to diary's authorship

JTA

The Swiss foundation that owns the publication rights to Anne Frank's diary is adding the famous diarist's father, Otto, as co-author, in what is widely viewed as an effort to extend the book's European copyright.

If the authorship change goes unchallenged, the Anne Frank Fonds, which Otto Frank established, will retain control over all printings of the book until 2050, *The New York Times* reported.

In most European countries, copyrights automatically expire 70 years after the author's death; in this case, the copyright is scheduled to expire on Dec. 31. In Canada, *The Globe and Mail* reported, the term of copyright subsists for 50 years after the author's death, or 50 years after first publication of a literary work first published posthumously. So whether the diary is already in the public domain in Canada depends whether one agrees with the Fonds' position that Otto is a co-author.

Translators also own the copyright to their translations, the *Globe* article reported.

Anne Frank died in 1945 at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, shortly before her 16th birthday. Otto Frank, the only immediate family member to survive the Holocaust, lived until 1980.

A foundation spokesman told the *Times* that legal experts had advised the foundation that adding Otto Frank as a co-author is justified because he "created a new work" by editing and reshaping the diary into "kind of a collage."

The copyright extension would most immediately impact the foundation's rival, the Anne Frank House museum in Amsterdam, which has been producing an online version of the diary that cannot go live until the foundation's copyright expires.

Both institutions had the support of Otto Frank, who bequeathed different materials to each, and the two have long had a contentious relationship. Decades ago, Anne Frank Fonds accused the Anne Frank House of commercializing the Holocaust victim's story by selling balloons and T-shirts at a travelling exhibit of the museum's artifacts and, in 2013, a Dutch court ordered the Amsterdam museum to return a cache of 25,000 documents loaned by the Swiss organization. Both sides accused each other of blocking a more amicable resolution to the conflict.

While is not clear yet whether the Anne Frank House or others will challenge the authorship change in court, and thus the copyright, a spokeswoman for the Anne Frank House told *The Times* that neither "Otto Frank nor any other person is co-author." ■

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An Einstein first in Canada...

November 2015 marks 100 years since Albert Einstein created his theory of relativity. Canadian Friends of Hebrew University developed the Einstein Legacy Project (ELP) honouring both this landmark anniversary and Albert Einstein's role as one of the founders of Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The first in a series of ELP global launches took place in Toronto at the home of Judy and Larry Tanenbaum. ELP co-chairs Judy Tanenbaum and Tribal Planet president Jeff Martin presented the six ELP initiatives: The Einstein Museum, The Next Einstein, Citizen Science, Einstein 3D the Film, Genius: 100 Visions of the Future book and the Dinner of the Century. ■ – *The Socialite*

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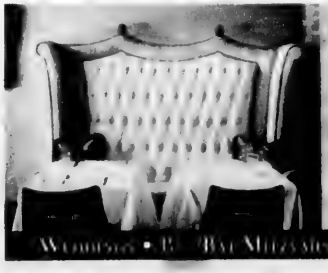

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What's New

NOV. 26 - DEC. 3

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Nov. 26

GENEALOGY WORKSHOP
Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a genealogy workshop, 7:30 p.m.

BLOOD DONOR CLINIC
A blood donor drive in honour of B'nai Brith Canada's **Michael Kates** will be held 4-8 p.m., Hillcrest Mall, 9350 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. To book an appointment, go to www.blood.ca

CAMPUS ISRAEL ACTIVISM
A student panel discusses campus Israel activism, sponsored by Hasbara Fellowships, 8 p.m., Aish Toronto, 949 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill. For more information, email rwalker@hasbarafellowships.org

FRUMBA
Pride of Israel Synagogue offers women's cardio dance fitness classes, Thursdays, noon. 416-226-0111.

Saturday, Nov. 28

YOUTH LATKE NIGHT
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation holds a youth latke night, 6:30 p.m. Register at www.bayt.ca

CAMP RAMAH LIVE
New and returning campers in grades 1-4 are invited to a Camp Ramah family paint party at Garnet Williams Community Centre, 6-8 p.m. $5.
RSVP www.campramah.com

SHMALTZANDO
An evening of music and humour featuring **Cantors Charles Osborne**, **Katie Oringel** and **Tibor Kovari** at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 7:30 p.m. $15/$20. For tickets, 416-221-3433.

MODERN JEWISH POLITICS
Prof. Kalman Weiser discusses "The birth of modern Jewish politics," 11 a.m., Congregation Darchei Noam.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Dec. 10 is Nov. 30. There will be no issue Dec. 31. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Sock drive

Carly Goldhar, left, and Charley Rangel, both 10, are collecting socks to distribute to homeless shelters and Ve'ahavta. The girls have already collected well over 1,000 socks and hope to collect 5,000. To donate, visit www.odd-sox.org.

BRIGHT HOPES GALA
Beit Rayim Synagogue holds a comedy auction night, 7 p.m., Lebovic JCC.
For tickets, 905-303-5471.

Sunday, Nov. 29

PEACE MEAL
Kim Wheatley, a member of Shawanaga First Nations, discusses "Understanding First Nations ways of knowing," 2 p.m., followed by a potluck supper, Temple Har Zion. RSVP **Fran Isaacs**, thisisfran@yahoo.com.

END OF LIFE CARE
Dr. Michael Gordon discusses "End of life care: a Jewish perspective," 11 a.m., First Narayever Congregation.

COOKBOOK LAUNCH
Residents of the Terraces of Baycrest launch the cookbook, *A Ta'am to Remember*, with speakers **Norene Gilletz** and **David (Sonny) Langer**, 2 p.m., 55 Ameer Ave. RSVP 416-785-2500, ext. 2267.

CONTEMPORARY ISRAELI MUSIC
Rabbi Lawrence Englander discusses "Religious and spiritual influences in contemporary Israeli music," 7:30 p.m., Congregation Darchei Noam. $5/$10.

MAJ MAGIC
Shoshana chapter of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO holds an afternoon to play or learn mah-jong, 1-4 p.m., Bayview Golf and Country Club. $40.
RSVP 416-630-8373.

JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL
Mordechai Ronen with **Steve Paikin** discuss their book, *I am a Victor*, 2 p.m.; Ventanas Trio performs at 7 p.m., Schwartz/Reisman Centre.

A CHANUKAH HULYANKE
Friends of Yiddish presents "A Chanukah Hulyanke," featuring Beyond the Pale, 2 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Tickets $8/$15. RSVP **Sandy**, 416-458-1440 or email yiddish18@yahoo.ca

40 YEARS IN JUDEA & SAMARIA
A night to commemorate 40 years of resettlement in Judea and Samaria, with guest speakers **Daniella Weiss** and **Malachi Levinger**, mayor of Kiryat Arbah/Hebron, 7 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. $5/$10. For details, email thejewishheritageproject@gmail.com

SONSHINE AND BROCCOLI
Associated Hebrew Schools present Sonshine and Broccoli at the Kamin Education Centre, 10 a.m. RSVP mkomlos@ahschools.com or 905-889-3998, ext. 508.

WORDS FROM THE STREET AWARDS
Ve'ahavta and the Toronto Writers Collective hold their annual Words from the Street awards ceremony, 2 p.m., Toronto Central YMCA, 20 Grosvenor St.

Tuesday, Dec. 1

LUNCH AND LEARN
Robert Kennedy discusses "A vanishing Diaspora: The future of the Jews in France and Europe," Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

HOW CIVILIZATIONS DIE
David P. Goldman discusses "How civilizations die: Implications for Europe and the Middle East," noon, business lunch lecture at Blaney McMurtry LLP. $25. Register at speakersaction.com.

Wednesday, Dec. 2

TORONTO MORASHA
Toronto Morasha presents a mini-series, Nov. 25, Dec. 2, Dec. 9 at Beth Emeth Synagogue, **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner** discusses "The pursuit of peace," 10 a.m. and **Rabbi Jonathan Ziring** discusses "Playing God," 11:15 a.m. To register, email savtaloretta@gmail.com

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Thursday, Dec. 3

YIDDISH VINKL

Renate Krakauer discusses her new book *Only by Blood*, noon, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $20 includes lunch. RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca

POST-HOLOCAUST LITERATURE

Yael Seliger discusses "Post-Holocaust literature: seventy years after the Holocaust," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

Coming Events

CHANUKAH FUN

Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a Chanukah carnival, Dec. 6, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

JRCC holds a Chanukah carnival at TanenbaumCHAT, Vaughan campus, 12:30-5 p.m.

Public menorah lighting, Mel Lastman Square, 5100 Yonge St., with food and music, Dec. 6, 6 p.m.

Beth Tikvah Sprouts holds a Chanukah carnival for children aged 1-7, Dec. 6, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Chanukah Who Dunnit, a murder-mystery dinner, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, Dec. 6, 5:30 p.m. Register by Nov. 30 at bethtikvahtoronto.org

Beth Emeth Synagogue's Chanukah Party is Dec. 6, 6-8 p.m.

TanenbaumCHAT and Beth Emeth present a Chanukah concert, Dec. 13, 7 p.m. Tickets, 416-633-3838.

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Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call Beth Feffer, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

◗ **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Nov. 26, **Jonno Lightstone** discusses "Big band jazz," with live music, 1-3 p.m.; Dec. 17, Big band swing concert and dance with **Lenny Graf and his Platinum Swing Orchestra,** latke lunch 12:30 p.m., concert and dance, 1-2:30 p.m. $15. RSVP 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or lisar@mnjcc.org

◗ **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9; Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.; exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526, or colinb@mnjcc.org

◗ **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Dec. 1, **Michael Klein** discusses "Understanding and interpreting dreams, Part 1," 10 a.m.; Dec. 3, lecture on winter driving, 1:30 p.m. Book club meets Tuesdays at 1 p.m.

◗ **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; creative circle Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., bring your handiwork; barber/hairdresser Dec. 3, 10 a.m.

◗ **National Council of Jewish Women-Aviva chapter** is looking for senior women who would like to join, 416-633-5100.

◗ **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860.

◗ **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. 416-256-1892.

◗ **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. **Judi,** 416-785-0941.

◗ **Shaar Shalom Synagogue.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.

◗ **Beth Emeth Synagogue.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.

◗ **Temple Har Zion.** Wednesdays, play bridge at 9:30 a.m.; mah-jong at 1 p.m.; Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com.

◗ **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge, mah-jong and canasta, Thursdays, 1:30-4 p.m. Call **Maureen,** 416-781-3514.

◗ **Beth Sholom Synagogue.** Creative exercise, lunch and cards, Wednesdays at noon. 416-783-6103.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

◗ All male cycle class meets Thursdays, 7 p.m.

◗ Women on weights class meets Monday, Thursdays at noon; Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

◗ Film appreciation, "City of dreams: Los Angeles and San Francisco," Wednesdays, Dec. 2-16, 1 p.m.

◗ **Jason Spillberg** discusses "Sugar: it's time to get your family off this stuff," Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m.

◗ Meditation workshop on peace, love and holidays, Dec. 22, 1 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

◗ *Cause for Celebration*, illustrations by **Yaara Eshet,** is on display at the gallery Dec. 1-Jan.3.

◗ Post-natal Aquafit, Tuesdays 10 a.m. Babies must be six months old. Ext. 567.

◗ Subscribe now to the Toronto Jewish Film Society's 38th season, ext. 139.

◗ Accessible yoga for people of all abilities. Sundays to Dec. 6, 1 p.m.

◗ Shabbat family party, spaces still available, Fridays, 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Ext. 388.

◗ Kat-Ka team, with Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror for children in grades 2-8, Nov. 29, 1-3:30 p.m. Experience Israel and Jewish social values in a welcoming social space. RSVP: shaliach.gesher@gmail.com

◗ Jewish mindfulness-adult education, Nov. 29, 9:30 a.m. RSVP principal@djcs.org

◗ Wheel dance: learn Latin dance in a mixed abilities class. Sundays to Dec. 6, 6 p.m. Ext. 330.

◗ Let's talk about parenting: Discussion in Hebrew about parenting, adults only, Dec. 3, 8 p.m. Ext. 321.

◗ Chanukah pool party, Dec. 5, 6:15 p.m. Ext. 388.

◗ Chanukah fun fair, Dec. 6, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

◗ Register for winter programs, Dec. 9 members' registration; Dec. 16, general registration.

◗ Why does history matter today? U of T Press authors **Steven Bednarski, Franklin Bialystok** and **Kenneth Bartlett** discuss how our society has been shaped by important moments in history, Dec. 7, 14, 21 at 1:30 p.m.

◗ Open community choir, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. with **Gillian Stecyk.** No experience or audition required.

◗ Everyday Friends: social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Ext. 330.

◗ Young rabbis speak: Jewish identity in a hyphenated world, with **Rabbis Noah Cheses, Adam Cutler, Jordan Helfman** and **Mirlam Margles,** Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m.

◗ Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. For programs, ext. 3025.

◗ Healthy U series: "Change your thoughts, change your life: how mindfulness affects your brain," Dec. 9, 7 p.m.

◗ Intermediate mah-jong Tuesdays to Dec. 15, 10:30 a.m. ■

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ASK ELLA

How to cope when children alter life plans?

Ella Burakowski
eb@thecjn.ca

Dear Ella,

Our inability to conceive has taken its toll on our marriage. Jake and I had a perfect engagement and wedding, we bought a home, and then the floor fell out from under us. We have been trying to have a baby for well over a year. My parents ask me for monthly updates, and Jake's parents don't say a word. My friends are having babies, showers, brises, and baby namings.

The stress is exhausting. Many nights I stay at work late so I don't have to face Jake. When we communicate, we argue. Our relationship has changed.

In vitro fertilization is our last option, but it's expensive. If that doesn't work, I fear Jake and I won't survive. How are we going to deal? How will we go on?

Empty Heart

Dear Empty Heart,

Your life plan has hit a major bump, and you are not facing this crisis together. Make no mistake: this is a crisis. You had a life plan, and with everything having fallen into place prior to this, your coping mechanisms are weak.

Communication is key at this crucial time, and rather than blaming and pulling away, you need to face this situation head on and together. If fact, you may need to involve a professional counsellor or support group to get you through this.

Try to take a step back and separate the emotion from the task at hand.

Work together, support each other, never ever assign blame, and put a concrete plan in place. Meet with a fertility medical expert, and be realistic. Give yourselves a deadline. Discuss an alternate plan, possibly adoption. You will be down at different times, so put your support and sensitivity into high gear.

If baby events upset you, stay away from them, and send a gift and your apology for not attending. Tell your parents to stop asking. Let them know you will inform them when there is something to tell.

Together you can get through this. You are fighting the same battle. Lean on each other, and don't lose sight of why you fell in love. Marriage is hard and rewarding. You have come to a crossroads. Stay on the same path, communicate and move ahead arm in arm. Whatever the outcome, you will get through it together and end up with a stronger bond.

Dear Ella,

My 33rd birthday is around the corner, and most of my life is on track. I'm dating a great guy, my career is taking off and I am making head way into paying off my student loans. I'm finally starting to reap the rewards of all the hard work I've put into getting to this stage in my life. However, there is a huge cloud hanging over me. Kids. I don't want any and the guilt is overwhelming – not so much for me, but for my parents, who talk endlessly about becoming grandparents. I would prefer to leave that for my sister to provide. How selfish am I? This decision was not made lightly. How do I tell them?

No Room for Kids

Dear No Room For Kids,

Many millennials are opting out of parenthood, so you are not alone. It's imperative that you came to this decision after careful deliberation, as there is no going back, so let's move forward.

Your parents raised you with hopes and dreams, and you are altering that path. Because of your decision, they will never have a grandchild from you, and that is something they need to accept, and grieve, if necessary. Share your reasons with them. Even if they don't agree, at least they will understand you did not come to this life decision without extreme introspection. Your comment about being selfish suggests you still have some emotional work to do, too. Once you are sure of your decision, embrace it. It would be so much worse to bring a child into this world for the wrong reasons. Stand tall, and live your dreams to the fullest. Just expect that you will come across some people who will never understand or agree with your decision. ■

Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

Mazel Tov!

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Mazel tov to Esther Mager, WW II. veteran on celebrating her 98th birthday on Dec. 3. With much love from your children, grandchildren, and family.

Mazel tov to Harold & Evelyn Davis celebrating their 68th wedding anniversary on Nov. 16. Best wishes from family and grandchildren. Enjoy many more happy, healthy years.

Happy 85th birthday and lots of love to Eleanor Dover from your children, grandchildren and of course, Kate and Jonny.

Happy 90th birthday Baba Bunny Gurvey! L'Chaim!! Wishing you many more happy and healthy years! With love from your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

Mazel Tov!
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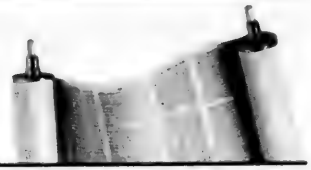
Parshah

Vayishlach | Genesis 32:4-36:43



Rabbi Ilan Acoca argues that Jacob represents the voice of the Jewish People
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl explains why ancient animosities need not continue
Rabbi Catharine Clark says some injuries stay with us for a lifetime, and never fully heal

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

Rachel our matriarch passed away tragically at a young age during childbirth. The Zohar says the reason she died young was due to a statement made by Jacob, our patriarch.

When Jacob left his father-in-law's Laban's home to return to his homeland, he left without informing Laban. Laban pursued Jacob, and when he finally caught up with Jacob, he accused Jacob of stealing his idols. Jacob was sure no one had stolen his idols, so he said, "With whomever you find your gods, he shall not live" (Bereshit 31:32). Little did Jacob know that Rachel had stolen the idols. The Angel of Death took the words of Jacob and used them to hurt Rachel until she passed away.

When Jacob comes to his blind father Isaac to get the blessing, Isaac touches him to find out who he is. After touching Jacob, Isaac says, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are Esau's hands" (Bereshit 27:22). Rashi interprets the verse as saying that as long as the voice is the voice of Jacob, the hands will not be the hands of Esau.

The voice of Jacob represents the voice of the Jewish People who through history used their prayers to ask God for salvation and help. The hands of Esau represent the hands of our enemies who want to annihilate us.

But I think it is even deeper than that. Words have the ability to build or destroy. What Rashi teaches us is that as long as we use our voice for positive actions – judging favourably, inspiring people and giving them hope – the hands of our enemies won't be able to touch us. God will judge us the way we judge others.

Let us all use our words positively and bring salvation to the world. Amen. ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

Symbolic conflict that escalated into physical violence characterized the relationship of Christianity to Judaism for more than 1,600 years. In our readings of sacred scripture, Jews and Christians interpreted biblical texts to portray each other in negative ways. The characters of Jacob and Esau were central to those expositions. Each religion claimed to be Jacob, the true Israel.

"The older will serve the younger" became the watchword of Christianity. Judaism was the first-born, represented by Esau. Christianity viewed itself as Jacob, the person and religion that had supplanted the older sibling. Esau had sold its birthright to Jacob, spurning the covenant for material benefit, a bowl of porridge.

Jews identified Esau as Edom, the Idumean nation to the south of Judea. Biblical Israel had bitter battles with Edom, and the Hasmoneans forcibly converted the Idumeans to Judaism. Herod, of Idumean origin, was a Roman client-king responsible for a reign of terror. Thus Edom came to be associated with Rome. Later, when Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire, the figure of Esau/Edom came to be identified as Rome/Christianity. For Jews persecuted by Christians, "Esau was a hunter" who demanded "that red, red stuff," the blood of the Jews.

As we know from our Torah portion, Jacob and Esau met and eventually restored relations. The historic animosity between them was diminished. In the last century, secular society created the possibility of better interfaith relations. Fifty years ago, the Vatican II declaration of Nostra Aetate profoundly changed Catholic-Jewish relations. Christians came to realize that the historic "teaching of contempt" against the Jews was a significant contributing factor to the Holocaust. Catholics and other Christians revised their belief to recognize the ongoing covenant of God and the Jewish People. We have moved from confrontation to co-operation. Ancient animosity need not continue. ■

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto.

Rabbi Catharine Clark

Genesis chapters 45 and 46 mention many times that Jacob travelled to Egypt in wagons. It's odd that the Torah emphasizes the mode of transportation by which Jacob is reunited with his beloved son Joseph. It's not as if the reader would otherwise think that Jacob drove his SUV down the highway to the land of Pharaoh.

An old cheerleading injury leads me to think that the Torah is calling our attention to an issue that is not entirely resolved in this week's parshah, Vayishlach.

Just before Jacob encounters his brother Esau for the first time in 20 years, he wrestles with an angel. In this famous bout, Jacob suffers the first-recorded instance of a sports injury. The angel dislocates his hip.

After Jacob departs from Esau, we learn that he arrived "whole" in the city of Shechem. Rashi believes this description indicates that Jacob was cured of his limp. I have my doubts, though.

Twenty-five years ago when the human pyramid on which I was standing went down, I dislocated my hip. The doctor put it back together, but it still clicks and twinges every once in a while. There is no way I could walk from Israel to Egypt, no matter how excited I might be to see my child again.

I think that the Torah informs us that Jacob travelled in wagons to hint that injuries sometimes never entirely heal. Often we will carry with us our wounds, physical and emotional, for a very long time.

Nonetheless, like Jacob, we persevere. Hopefully, also like Jacob, we will journey with joy despite our aches and pains. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is the spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom, a Conservative synagogue in London, Ontario.

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Norene Gilletz first recipient of Gil Marks memorial award

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A lot people retire when they turn 65. Many others slacken the pace of their lives when they're in their 70s. But at age 75, Norene Gilletz shows no signs of slowing down.

Indeed, Gilletz, a *CJN* food columnist, a food consultant and author of 11 kosher cookbooks, has had quite a busy year.

She edited three new cookbooks, she launched many new products for her line of kosher food, and last week she became the first recipient of the Gil Marks Memorial Award. She was honoured at KosherFeast, a pre-event for KosherFest 2015, which took place in Secaucus, N.J.

"I was shocked when they announced my name," Gilletz recounted. "I was speechless. What an honour.

"The best part is being a Canadian and being recognized by the international culinary community."

Gil Marks – he died of cancer last year – was a very special person and a "dear friend," she said. "He was an amazing human being. He was a rabbi, a scholar, and an award-winning kosher food author."

Gilletz said that for the award, leaders in the kosher cooking world were asked to nominate a respected culinary professional who is a mentor and a support for others in the field.

Her role as a mentor was very apparent when she edited *The Silver Platter. Wholesome, Family-Friendly Recipes from the Kitchen of Daniella Silver*, an international bestseller published in May.

Gilletz coached Silver for months. "I taught her the art of writing a recipe so other people could follow."

Gilletz also edited *A Ta'am to Remember: Recipes and Recollections from the Terraces of Baycrest*, a community cookbook to be released this month.

Elaine Kaplan, the project manager, said that without Gilletz's leadership there would not have been a cookbook.

As well, Gilletz edited *Vegan-Up*, an international cookbook that will be also be released later this year.

Norene Gilletz Kitchen, her kosher food line, expanded the number of products considerably this year. Her soups, meatballs, tapenades, salads and Koogletz can now be found in the kosher section of Sobey's at Clark and Hilda avenues, and selected kosher stores. "I tell people, if you want to cook, buy my cookbooks. If don't want to cook you can just buy my products," she said with a laugh.

She, Yehuda Goldberg and Mona Pasternak, her partners in the food-line venture, were recently featured on *Food Factory Canada*, a television show on Food Network Canada. "It was huge fun," said Gilletz. "It was seven hours of shooting for six minutes of tape."

Norene Gilletz

> *The best part is being a Canadian and being recognized by the international culinary community*

She also has a large following on Facebook. "We have 5,000 friends on Norene's Kitchen and counting. I always joke, 'My kitchen is crowded, but there's always room for more.'"

Her writing career began with *Second Helpings Please!* She was the editor of this best selling kosher cookbook, which was published in 1968 by B'nai Brith Women in Montreal. "It all started at a tea membership," she recalled. "Our baking was so delicious someone suggested we write a cookbook."

Eleven cookbooks, hundreds of food columns and countless food demonstrations later, Gilletz is still very much on the go.

In fact, this interview was conducted, while she was en route to Ottawa for the Health and Wellness Conference sponsored by the Jewish Youth Library. She was the keynote speaker.

Last month, she led an interactive challah bake with 400 people in Winnipeg and then two weeks later she and Silver were part of the authors corner at KosherFest.

"It's a crazy pace," Gilletz admitted. "I decompress on Shabbas at shul."

She has already embarked on two new culinary projects. She is editing recipes for *The Silver Platter 2* and she's working with Dr. Edward Wein, a biochemist, on recipes to help reduce the risk of dementia.

"I love what I do, there's always something new on the horizon," she mused. "Why should I slow down when I'm having so much fun?"■

For the latest Jewish food trends visit **www.cjnews.com/food**

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
NOVEMBER 26, 2015

Maya Halevy: 'science culture' binds us together

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Maya Halevy, director of the Bloomfield Science Museum Jerusalem for the past 20 years, has used her background as an architect and town planner together with her museology studies to help develop the science centre into an institution that promotes science culture and education in Israel.

During a recent interview with *The CJN* in advance of her visit to Montreal for the Association for Science and Technology Centres conference, as well as making time to visit science centres in Ottawa and Toronto, Halevy said that even in spite of the current wave of terror in Israel, she is focused on promoting science culture in the Middle East, "as we believe that with better education and better science and technology, people can see the benefit of co-operation."

Maya Halevy believes in promoting science education for all Israelis.

Can you tell me about your museum and its role in Israeli society?

The museum was established in its permanent place in 1992, but it was started as a pilot project in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem by Prof. Peter Hillman. He thought the idea of building interactive exhibits in museums would be a good idea.

I joined Peter Hillman in 1983, and we started together to realize what a science centre is in Israel. There are a lot in common in science centres in the approach, but still, you want to have it with local flavour, with local answers to the local needs.

The Jerusalem Foundation was very interested in the idea of building a science museum in Jerusalem, as they saw the potential of bringing science to the citizens of Jerusalem, bringing science to the children of Jerusalem, to the families.

From Day 1, we are really operating under joint auspices of two organizations; Hebrew University and the Jerusalem Foundation.

We see that we are helping young scientists, young researchers, young engineers, students who are working here as guides, or people with science-based careers. What they learn here while they are working as guides is to be better communicators of science. We see both sides.

Why is it important to promote science as part of the culture?

Our idea is that we would very much like to promote science education, we would very much like to develop a culture of science, because sometimes people don't look at science as part of their culture, and we believe that it is part of every citizen of the 21st century. We want to advance science among all communities. That is why we are working very hard to engage all communities of Israel, including the Jewish population, the Arab population, the secular and the religious. This is a kind of hub for people to meet around science and technology. We believe that science and technology is our common language, and if we believe that people share the same value when we speak about science and technology and when we speak about educating the future of young kids, we see this as a kind of common ground for working together, for meeting, for engaging.

We did an interesting project for a few years with the European Union, with 10 European countries, that we called "Engineers." It was about how to promote engineering into science lessons in elementary schools. I can tell you it was a great success in Israel, especially. The Ministry of Education decided to adopt the program that we developed, and it is now part of the curriculum in all elementary schools in Israel. So this is a way that the science museum can influence and make an impact.

> *Young people are born as scientists and researchers and have a lot of curiosity and somehow they lose it while they are in school.*

In what ways does the museum work to reach its goals?

We also work as a lab, because we are developing our own exhibits. We have a very professional workshop with many professionals from different disciplines – engineers, scientists, educators, people with social science and humanities backgrounds, and designers. We are all working together.

This is a lab for developing new exhibits and new tools to present science education, principles and phenomena. It is also a lab to develop new programs, new activities. So I can tell you that our main tool now is that we are trying to introduce – and we've already started to do it with a lot of success – a new approach to science, education and science culture.

This is called the "makers approach." Makers are people who we used to call do-it-yourself people. They used to do things with their hands. We looked at them as hobbyists. Today, makers are spread all over. It's a kind of new movement of people using tools and ideas, and they share them. Because technology is very accessible, because it is easy to do things with all the electronic devices, and it is very easy to share, there is a big wave of new approaches to people as innovators and entrepreneurs who call themselves makers.

We realize that this is a good approach for science education. It makes people engage in science education. We always say that young people are born as scientists and researchers and have a lot of curiosity and somehow, they lose it while they are in school.

We always try to understand why they lose it. We think they lose it because it's not very relevant to them, and because they don't see the challenge. Sometimes, you're finding the answer to a question that the teacher already knows the answer. So you don't feel like an explorer. And we want to very much to bring back the exploration spirit and the problem-solving process, and the ability to be engaged in it.

What are your ambitions for the museum's role in Israel?

We used to say that science museums are a nice place to visit, but today science museums have an important role in changing science education as an informal institution, because more and more we realize that informal learning is very important.

They can help to engage citizens with very interesting scientific discussions, especially when it comes to ethics, social responsibility. We want citizens to be engaged. We want citizens to know more when they need to make decisions. There are always questions, like the way the city makes water or getting renewable energy. Those kinds of issues, every person needs to understand them in order to make their own decisions. It's not just scientists or engineers who can take responsibility for us. ■

This interview was edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Symbolic language key to opening the vault of meaning

Backstory

PAUL SOCKEN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

You cannot simply "read" Jewish source texts. In order to understand them, you need to know how to interpret their unique language.

Reading their English translation only gets through one layer of meaning. There are other layers. The authors of the Bible, prophets, megillot and Talmud wrote in imagery, poetic expressions and symbolism that need to be clarified in order for them to reveal their profound meaning.

In *Why Read Talmud in the Twenty-First Century*, a collection of essays I edited, Jeffrey Rubenstein analyzes a brief story from the Talmud:

A man is removing rocks from his field and putting them into the public domain when a Chassid asks angrily why he is removing rocks from a domain that does not belong to him and putting them into his own domain. Some time later, the man sells the field and stumbles on the same stones while walking. "That Chassid spoke well to me," he says.

This is a peculiar tale. The man was removing stones from his own property and throwing them into the public domain, but the Chassid rebuked him for doing the opposite. We do not understand the significance of the event until the end of the story, when the man trips. What was his property no longer is, and the public property is filled with stones. In the final analysis, acting selfishly caused the man's fall.

The story highlights the fact that people often feel a sense of entitlement and act in their own best interest, but concludes with the message that nothing is ever certain and circumstances change. We are all vulnerable. If we cling stubbornly to what is ours with no respect for what belongs to others – the "public square" – then we lose perspective and cannot understand the concept of the greater good. The story illustrates how what belongs to all is what is most valuable and endures.

The famous scene in the Bible with the talking donkey is another example of how stories are illuminated through explication. In the story, the fearful king of Moab, Balak, hires a revered, pagan prophet, Balaam, to curse the Israelites and ensure their destruction. As the events unfold, Balaam fails to see an angel sent by God wielding a sword in front of him, but the donkey he is riding does, and refuses to move. Balaam strikes the donkey repeatedly before the donkey rebukes him and proclaims his innocence.

> *We are not used to struggling with a profound text and persevering until it yields its meaning*

Why does the shrewd and cunning Balaam not see what the simple donkey sees?

Balaam is on a mission that he knows is wrong. Although he had been told by God not to curse the Israelites, he is seduced by greed and glory. He is frustrated at being unable to circumvent God's command, in spite of repeated efforts. The story is not really about a donkey and an angel, but about moral blindness in the pursuit of evil deeds.

In each of these two cases, we witness a different kind of blindness. The man removing the stones does not foresee that neglecting the public good and focusing only on what he perceives to be his best interests will backfire and cause him harm. Balaam's overwhelming desire for money and glory leads a renowned man to subvert God's direct command. As in text, so in life. We are guilty of not seeing what is before our eyes, and even when we do, we often do not know how to interpret and understand it. These stories teach us to open our eyes.

For Jewish source texts to resonate with us today, we must understand that symbolic language is the key to opening the vault of meaning. It is easy for skeptics to dismiss texts they have not fully understood because they have read them only superficially. We are not used to struggling with a profound text and persevering until it yields its meaning. But the rewards for those who do are enormous. These stories help us gain perspective and a deeper insight into life, and assist in developing ethical and spiritual character. You don't read any serious text, you study it. ■

Paul Socken is distinguished professor emeritus at the University of Waterloo, Ont.

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Inside

Ottawa backs Israel at the United Nations

Trudeau government votes against six anti-Israel resolutions.

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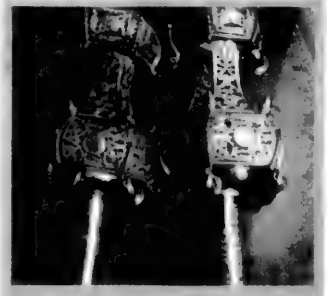

Who do these Torah crowns belong to?

100-year-old Judaica items discovered on a bus by Toronto rabbi. **PAGE 15**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:16 p.m.	5:23 p.m.
Montreal	3:53 p.m.	5:01 p.m.
Ottawa	4:02 p.m.	5:10 p.m.
Toronto	4:23 p.m.	5:29 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:10 p.m.	5:24 p.m.
Calgary	4:13 p.m.	5:28 p.m.
Vancouver	3:57 p.m.	5:10 p.m.

Alberta's Jews feel the pinch

Job losses and financial stress are on the rise in Calgary and Edmonton. Amid an oil downturn, how is the Jewish community responding? **PAGE 8**

Marketing the Festival of Lights

Is commercialism diluting Chanukah's message? **PAGE 4**
PLUS: Our holiday movie **PAGE 39**

There's more to peace than politics

Q&A: Interfaith dialogue could ensure any treaty is more than a piece of paper, rabbi says. **PAGE 50**

Twenty years of fressing

Free Times Cafe celebrates two decades of Sunday brunch and klezmer music. **PAGE 38**

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THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Doo Doo's heroics were no joke, and 'offensive' subway promotion removed

He wasn't clowning around

Thornhill Ont.'s Doo Doo the Clown, a.k.a. Shane Farberman, became a global sensation after rescuing two women who were being harassed by a 25-year-old man who police said was high on crystal meth. While driving home in full makeup Nov. 22, Farberman saw a man jumping on cars near Bathurst and Front streets in Toronto and called 911. After the man hit the women, Farberman urged them to jump into his SUV, joining two clowns who work for him. The incident was captured on dashcam video that went viral. The 32-year clowning veteran received a bravery award from Toronto City Coun. Norm Kelly.

Shane Farberman and Coun. Norm Kelly

Amazon pulls ads with Nazi imagery

Amazon pulled Nazi-symbol-laden ads for its new *The Man in the High Castle* streaming TV show from a busy New York subway line after requests by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill Blasio. The ads featuring modified Nazi eagles and wartime Japanese flags were removed from the 42nd Street shuttle after causing a stir Nov. 24. The series, based on a 1962 novel by Philip K. Dick, depicts an alternate history in which the Nazis and Japan won World War II and partitioned the United States. Jewish groups criticized the promotion, and Blasio said it was "irresponsible and offensive."

Israeli exec says Avis turned him away

A vice-president of Teva pharmaceuticals accused Avis of declining to accept his Israeli documents when he tried to rent a car Nov. 20. Dov Bergwerk said an agent at Avis' Manhattan branch told him it was policy not to recognize Israeli documents, and the manager sided with the employee. But Bergwerk says he has rented from Avis many times, including two days earlier at the same location, and has an Avis loyalty card. Avis head office confirmed his documents were OK, but the manager said she wouldn't rent to him because he argued with her. In a Nov. 22 statement, Avis said it doesn't tolerate discrimination, but added an "investigation suggests that this customer is unfairly maligning us with unfounded accusations." ■

Gematria

4

The number of Jewish bubbies, aged 87 to 95, who had their weekly mah-jong game in their condominium clubhouse broken up by police in Altamonte Springs, Fla., last month for illegal gambling. It turned out their game's $4 prize cap didn't violate a Florida law that limits penny ante game prizes to $10 or less.

83

The age of Romanian-born Rita Berkowitz, who won Israel's third annual Miss Holocaust Survivors Beauty Pageant Nov. 24.

Quotable

The role of interreligious dialogue in times of conflict, when the peace talks have broken down, is to keep the dream alive and hope alive

— Rabbi Ron Kronish, founder and director of the Interreligious Coordinating Council of Israel. See full interview on page 50.

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK

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Letters to the Editor

Education always on agenda

In the article, "CIJA renews effort to alleviate school funding," (Nov. 19), Mordechai Ben-Dat, co-founder of Grassroots for Affordable Jewish Education, is quoted as saying, that he is "encouraged the organized Jewish community is putting affordability back on the agenda." While we share his enthusiasm about all of our collective efforts, and we look forward to working with him and the many committed individuals and organizations who comprise the task force, it is important to note that affordable Jewish education has always remained central to the agendas of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Affordable Jewish education is of paramount importance to both organizations and a core mandate of UJA Federation's Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education. What we are currently undertaking, in partnership with the Toronto and Ottawa Jewish federations, is an approach that will bring together all of our vibrant community's varied initiatives with a unified focus on securing additional support for our schools, and their constituent parent and student bodies.

Beri Nadler,
Co-chair CIJA, GTA
Toronto

Swimming in the right pool

Columnist Bernie Farber, post-election, still remains upset at the Canadian Jewish community's partisan support of Stephen Harper ("Learning the lessons of political partisanship," Nov. 19).

He believes that "the first lesson of government relations was to swim in all political pools."

Left-wing ideologues fail to realize that the Jewish community and so many others recognize these as, yes, "political pools" which pale in significance to the "pool" of honesty and moral fortitude.

Sam Mitnick
Cote St. Luc, Quebec

Rabbis must lead by example

In his column reflecting upon the decision of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC) to admit students with non-Jewish spouses or partners, Rabbi Dow Marmur correctly points out that "Clergy don't reflect their congregations. Clergy lead their congregations" (Rabbis must lead, not follow," Nov. 12).

This decision by the RRC certainly doesn't represent the feelings of all rabbis and members of this branch of Judaism, many of whom have been outspoken in their disagreement.

As a longstanding member of Toronto's Reconstructionist Congregation Darchei Noam, I can vouch for the fact that we have always been welcoming to intermarried families, many of whom have been very active in all facets of life in our Jewish community.

However, the rabbi is not just one of us. The rabbi must lead by example. If we believe in the continuity of the Jewish People, we cannot allow ourselves to water down what is the principal leadership role in the Jewish community.

Saul D. Paton
Toronto

Canada as an 'honest broker'

How well will Justin Trudeau's government handle foreign policy issues your question of the week asks (Nov. 19). No doubt decidedly better than Canada's previous government.

Regarding Israel, few actually know Canada's longstanding policy on key issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Look at the official website of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. It's reasonably balanced, fulfilling Canada's proper role as an "honest broker." Our previous government disregarded it, focusing instead on one-sided actions.

Bernard Katz
Toronto

Question of the week

Tell us about your family traditions for giving gifts on Chanukah.

Let us know in 150 words or less at cjninfo@gmail.com

Letters to the editor are welcome in English or French. All letters must bear the sender's name, address and telephone number. We reserve the right to edit and condense letters.

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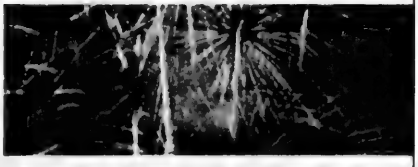

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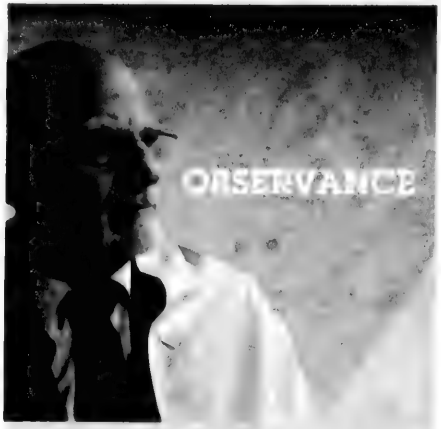

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RABBI-2-RABBI

Chanukah's branding problem

The holiday is supposed to be about overcoming assimilationist tendencies, but the rampant commercialism of the December season dilutes the message

RABBI AVI FINEGOLD
FOUNDER, THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY, MONTREAL

RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM
BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Scheim: There is no shortage of insights – spiritual, historical, and otherwise – to be derived from Chanukah. The joyous holiday's theme of Jewish religious survival in the face of rampant assimilationist pressures reassures us in these modern times that unsettling demographic trends can be overcome.

However, it is an easy-to-miss aspect of the Chanukah ritual that may convey one of the most important messages of the holiday today. After lighting the candles, we recite *Hanerot Halalu* – "These lights… are holy and we are not permitted to make any practical use of them, other than look at them." This restriction stands in harsh contrast to the commercialism of the December season.

Are we able, in this value-driven world, to stand back, look at the Chanukah lights, and derive nothing in return other than a quiet moment of inspiration?

Rabbi Finegold: You touch on a sore spot of mine. Every year, the commercialism of the season hits me harder, though I have learned to bite my tongue lest I be considered the Chanukah Grinch. The truth is there is absolutely nothing in the Chanukah story that leads one to gift-giving. Even the idea of Chanukah gelt and its association with the dreidel has fallen prey to historical research.

This is especially hard now that I have young children who expect to receive gifts and gelt. Not to worry, though – while I refuse to buy into the commercialism, my wife and all the kids' grandparents are more than happy to indulge them.

I like to point out that the Chanukah victory is one of overcoming assimilationist tendencies within our society. As modern Jews, we need to remember that integration does not have to equal assimilation, and that while we have a requirement to publicize the mitzvah, there is a strong component of family woven into the lighting of candles at home.

Perhaps we could take the outsize exposure that Chanukah receives and use it to our advantage. Perhaps a nicely crafted message that emphasizes the message of the holidays and a reminder of what the candles represent might bring the emphasis back to the mitzvah of Chanukah.

Rabbi Scheim: The major controversy so far this pre-winter holiday season has been Starbucks' decision to remove Christmas imagery from its festive cups. People are up in arms (Donald Trump among them!). And yet none of the complainers seem troubled by the transformation of the most significant Christian holiday of the year into a shopping frenzy.

This may enable us to separate ourselves from the seasonal commercial trends and to tout our differences, emphasizing, as you suggest, the values of family and faith preservation in the face of profoundly challenging odds (while enjoying tasty treats at the same time).

Allowing Chanukah to be seen as the Jewish alternative to Christmas represents a lost opportunity of colossal proportions. Rather, Chanukah should remain as our sages intended – a paradigm of Jewish historical and spiritual resilience, and testimony for our uncanny ability to find and to preserve light even in the darkest of places.

Rabbi Finegold: The issue, as you articulate it, seems to be purely one of proximity. If only Chanukah had a different place in the calendar, we would be able to give it its own identity. I would add that the relatively late addition to the calendar also didn't do Chanukah any favours in defining itself. To use current language, Chanukah seems to have a branding problem.

While I am not an expert in the field, I would recommend that as rabbis we take a two-pronged approach. First, we should differentiate between Christmas, which has a gift-giving component integral to its identity (because of the gifts that the Magi brought to Bethlehem), and Chanukah, which does not. Then we begin to emphasize the "paradigm of historical and spiritual resilience" and tie the identity of the holiday to our own identity.

The joke goes that all Jewish holidays can be summed up by the line "They tried to kill us, we won, let's eat." To me, that punchline seems to point to something profound: we celebrate our resilience by sharing a meal with friends – not by participating in a commercial buying spree and outdoing each other with how much we can spend. ■

How to reach us

Vol. XLV, No. 47 (2,223)*

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Subscription inquiries: 416-932-5095
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Sales, National & Toronto Local: Canadian Primedia, 416-922-3605

Israeli Advertising Representative:
IMP Tel: 02-625-2933 E-mail: info@impmedia.co.il

Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation
July 14, 2015

Canadian Heritage / Patrimoine canadien

Postmaster: Please return 2985 and changes of address to: CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7
Postage Paid at Toronto Canada Post Publication Agreement #40010684
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From the Archives | Happy Chanukah

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

A cheder Chanukah party at Beth David Synagogue in Brantford, Ont., in 1959. At rear are Sybil Pruzansky and Rabbi Jerry Pruzansky. The children are, from left, Meil Spiegal, Ian Gotlieb, Howard Rotberg, Marlene Cohen, Bobby Willinsky, Helene Raimer, Jeffrey Kanter, Andy Brown and Martin Abels.

SeeJN | Still beautiful

YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

Holocaust survivor Rita Berkowitz, 83 celebrates winning the third annual Holocaust survivors beauty pageant contest in Haifa, Nov. 24. Thirteen women who survived World War II competed for the honour of being Israel's "Miss Holocaust Survivor." See item on Trending page 2.

From Yoni's Desk

The honest broker the UN desperately needs

In early November, less than three weeks after the Liberal party won a majority in the federal election, newly appointed Canadian Foreign Minister Stéphane Dion was quoted as saying that the Trudeau government would assume the role of "honest broker" in the Middle East. As *The CJN* reported at the time, it was unclear whether Dion was cited correctly, but that did not stop many in the Jewish community from worrying that Justin Trudeau's Liberals would abandon the strong support for Israel adopted by the Stephen Harper government that preceded it.

Now, perhaps we have some more clarity on the matter.

Last week, the United Nations General Assembly adopted six non-binding resolutions against Israel. As Ron Csillag reports in this week's *CJN*, Canada voted against all of them (see page 12).

The latest UN resolutions cover the usual gamut of perceived Israeli abuses, and express a one-sided view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Among the resolutions are calls for continued "efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-state solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders," an expression of "grave concern about the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem," and a reiteration of the UN's determination that "any actions taken by Israel, the occupying power, to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem are illegal and therefore null and void and have no validity whatsoever, and [it] calls upon Israel to immediately cease all such illegal and unilateral measures."

As the monitoring organization UN Watch noted, there were no resolutions directed against serial human rights abusers like China, Cuba, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. Islamic State (ISIS) wasn't mentioned. Neither were Palestinian terrorists.

Israel, meanwhile, was also censured for its "continued occupation of the Syrian Golan and its de facto annexation," which "constitute a stumbling block in the way of achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region." If you assumed the United Nations' concern when it comes to Syria would be on the bloody civil war that has killed hundreds of thousands, displaced many more and threatens to engulf the world in an even more ferocious conflict, well, you just don't know how the UN operates.

In other words, the latest resolutions against Israel should come as no surprise. This is one of those biases that Israel and its supporters assume, if not accept, is inevitable. And while groups like UN Watch do well to report on the UN's Israel infatuation, few believe the situation can or will change anytime soon.

Even so, the fact that the Trudeau Liberals took a stand against these six resolutions might at least allay the concerns of some Jewish Canadians. In these early days, it appears Canada's new leadership will continue to publicly support the Jewish state, as the Harper Conservatives did. That's encouraging news, not least because the UN is in desperate need of a true honest broker when it comes to Israel. ■ — YONI

ESSAY

Combatting discrimination in all its forms

Joel Reitman

As Parliament returns this week, our community should be encouraged by the constructive relationships we have with the major federal political parties. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' (CIJA) non-partisan approach is appreciated by the Liberals, the Conservatives, and the NDP.

As the vice chair of CIJA's national board, co-chair of CIJA GTA, past chair of the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC), and someone who has been active in politics for years, I have a unique view on how our non-partisan approach to advocacy enables us to advance the public policy interests of the organized Jewish community.

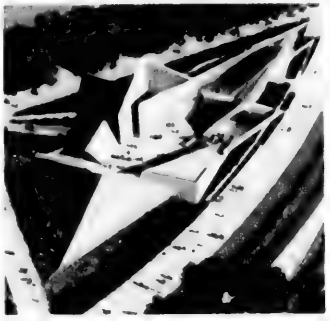
Cross-party relationships, nurtured over decades, have helped CIJA achieve important outcomes. For example, in the last Parliament, CIJA and our partners built unanimous, all-party support to change Canadian foreign policy to reflect the experience of Jewish refugees from the Middle East and North Africa. Canada is the first country outside of Israel to acknowledge, through a formal decision of cabinet, the plight of the nearly one million Jews who were forced to flee their homes after the creation of the Jewish state.

For years, our community was troubled that Canada was the only G7 nation without a memorial to the victims of the Shoah in its capital. Next autumn, after years of effort, that will change when the National Holocaust Monument is unveiled in Ottawa. CIJA is honoured to have continued the work of the Canada Israel Committee and Canadian Jewish Congress, and partnered with government and community members across Canada to create a striking memorial to the victims of this most egregious incarnation of anti-Semitism.

We combat discrimination in all its forms. As a member of the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness, CIJA is advocating for the prohibition of genetic discrimination. This is particularly relevant for Jewish women because the BRCA genetic markers that indicate an elevated risk for breast and ovarian cancers are disproportionately prevalent among Ashkenazim, making genetic testing a very important diagnostic tool for our community. The Liberals, Conservatives and NDP all affirmed their commitment to banning genetic discrimination during an election debate hosted by CIJA and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. We will continue working with all parties to see this campaign pledge become enshrined in law. We will also work with all parties at the provincial level to ensure that Canadians are protected from genetic discrimination in jurisdictions across the country.

Because these issues span the federal-provincial divide, so, too, do our relationships. In Ontario, specifically, we were pleased when Premier Kathleen Wynne announced her upcoming mission to Israel at CIJA's 2015 Words and Deeds dinner, building on her government's pledge to establish a trade office in Israel. This commitment to promote bilateral ties is particularly important as the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement takes hold in Europe.

Regarding BDS, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has repeatedly spoken out on the issue in support of Israel's fundamental rights. When the prime minister reached out to CIJA leadership immediately following the election, he reiterated that his government would maintain Canadian support for Israel. We applauded the government last week when our diplomats walked the talk at the United Nations. The federal government is working closely with our community and has kept its pledge, maintaining Canada's principled opposition to the annual barrage of resolutions at the UN General Assembly that single out Israel for one-sided condemnation, one of only eight countries out of 193 to do so.



The National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa is to be unveiled next autumn.

> *Cross-party relationships have helped CIJA achieve important outcomes.*

There is, perhaps, no better example than Bill C-51 of how our relationships are allowing us to participate in consequential policy debates. Because the Jewish community is an at-risk group, CIJA is active in the discussion around the contentious anti-terrorism bill that became law during the last Parliament. Like the Liberals, we supported the bill with caveats. As a result of our just, thoughtful, non-partisan position, our intervention was welcomed by all three parties.

Our views were reflected in the Liberal party's orientation toward the bill and our House of Commons testimony was quoted, alongside the testimony of other experts testifying on the bill, in a government release. Even the NDP, which voted against the legislation, offered praise, most notably for our proposal that the chair of the security intelligence review committee be designated an officer of Parliament.

When Trudeau phoned CIJA leadership, C-51 was an important part of the discussion. The prime minister affirmed his close, longstanding relationship with CIJA and the organized Jewish community. He indicated that he wanted our meaningful and mutually beneficial relationship to continue, on C-51 and the wide array of issues on our community's public policy agenda.

From working with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto to reduce the cost of Jewish education, to community security, to combating discrimination, and to the myriad other issues on our list of priorities, CIJA is deeply committed to improving the quality of Jewish life across Canada. Our work is possible because of relationships. As we welcome the new Parliament, we invite you to start a relationship with us, learn about our work, take our community survey, or just tell us how you feel. Together we can make a difference. ■

Joel Reitman is the vice-chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and co-chair of CIJA GTA. For more information, visit www.cija.ca

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 3, 2015

Albertan Jews feeling effects of oil downturn

Community organizations are seeing an uptick in economic stress, and many wonder whether the worst is yet to come

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Back in September, the Conference Board of Canada took a look at the economy of Calgary and didn't like what it saw.

Although the city had done quite well for the first nine months of 2014, by the end of the year, the falling price of oil was beginning to have an impact on various sectors of the economy – everything from the oil patch itself to housing starts, construction and the service industry.

The conference board's Metropolitan Outlook, which examined the economies of 13 Canadian cities, predicted Calgary's economic performance would be among the country's worst in 2015. Its unemployment rate would climb from 5.1 per cent in 2014 to 5.9 per cent this year, and to 6.1 per cent in 2016.

Economic growth was expected to plunge from 5.1 per cent in 2014 to negative 0.5 per cent this year.

It was only a matter of time for the effects to be felt by the city's Jewish population, which numbers around 8,500. Early into the oil recession, there wasn't much to report in terms of changes to community fundraising or a draw on community resources. But that has changed in recent months, though not to crisis proportions, said Judy Shapiro, associate executive director of the Calgary Jewish Federation and Marty Hornstein, executive director of Jewish Family Service Calgary (JFSC).

Still, for those who've lost their jobs because of the economic downturn, the situation is grave, even embarrassing. A number of people who were asked to comment for this story declined to do so.

Some who have been brought low by the changing economic circumstances are lawyers and engineers who had done well for themselves – to the extent they had been spending $40,000 a year to send their children to university. Now, they're facing the prospect of having to scale back their lifestyles. Some who had moved to the province, have left. But "a lot are sticking around to see what will happen," Hornstein said.

This isn't Hornstein's first rodeo, riding the ups and downs of an oil patch recession. It happened in the 1980s and again in the 1990s, he said.

Calgary's economic growth is expected to plunge this year. SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO

"This time it's different, because more people have businesses related to the success of the city," he said.

Many of those who had moved to Alberta, not necessarily to work in the petroleum industry, but to participate in the economic boom prompted by high oil prices, are suffering. Jobs aren't coming back anytime soon, and they are facing difficult decisions.

"We're counselling people who live in their homes, that have sentimental values, that they can't afford to live there anymore," Hornstein said.

Still, for many people, that's tough advice to take.

"They're going through a death-like experience," he said.

"A lot of it centres on Jewish pride – 'I don't want to let people know I have to move into an apartment,'" he added.

Community organizations have noticed the changing economic circumstances in a variety of ways. You can see it in the annual food drive, which is held on *Kol Nidrei* night. Pitches are made at the city's synagogues, and "this year we got less than we've received in previous years," Hornstein said. "We got 10 per cent less than we usually get. The food goes to the side of the story that is the saddest, to people who need the food."

"Our requests from people for basic needs increased by 15 per cent," he said.

Something similar is happening three hours north, up Highway 2 in Edmonton, where some 5,500 Jews live.

Larry Derkach, executive director of Jewish Family Services, said "indicators of economic stress in Alberta have been striking: weekly reports of large layoffs, 23 per cent increase in food bank use over last year, another drop in oil prices. Certainly this is also having an impact on vulnerable members of the Jewish community in Edmonton, with issues [like] job loss, food insecurity, financial stress and stress on relationships. We are experiencing increased demands, but unfortunately, I cannot put numbers to that for Edmonton's Jewish community at the moment."

Lynne Preston, executive director of the Calgary Jewish Community Centre, said the effects of the oil downturn are only now beginning to be felt.

Some of the JCC's offerings haven't been affected, such as its daycare and after-school programming. But enrolment in its program for two-year-olds, geared to stay-at-home moms, has dropped by half, likely because it's seen as a luxury that people can no longer afford.

Enrolment in the JCC's summer camp was on par with that of previous years, but numbers for the mid-winter camp are down 10 to 20 per cent, she said.

"I think we're starting to feel the effects of the downturn now. A lot of layoffs hadn't yet occurred in the summer. A substantial number of layoffs took place in the last three or four months," she said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

Allan Newman,
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The media's Islamaphobia obsession

Henry Srebrnik

In the days after ISIS terrorists carried out its attacks in Paris, virtually every media outlet immediately rushed to produce stories about a feared anti-Muslim backlash. For example, these two headlines appeared in the Nov. 21 edition of the *Charlottetown Guardian*: "Paris Muslims facing hostility after attacks" and "Don't let concern mask racism, says Ontario premier."

The media all seem in lock-step on this issue, and these sorts of stories are so ubiquitous now that you can count on one appearing the day after any terror activities related to Islamists. A visitor from Mars might get the impression that Parisians, or Torontonians, are running around bombing mosques and killing Muslims.

It all makes you wonder who decided on the "party line" to be taken by the media?

The great British economist John Maynard Keynes argued that the ideas of economists and political philosophers are more powerful than is commonly understood. "Practical men," he wrote, "who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually slaves of some defunct economist."

And so it is with journalists. They have become intellectual prisoners of those academic ideologues they studied in university. Theorists such as the immensely influential literary theorist Edward Said believed western populations are innately racist, xenophobic and bigoted against those he called non-western "others." His acolytes believe that such negative attitudes now manifest themselves after every atrocity. They also contend that the perpetrators are mainly disturbed criminals, the products of poverty, unemployment and alienation, and not of religious fanaticism.

In other words, the reaction to terrorism is mainly "Islamophobia," and has little to do with well-founded fear.

This term is, by the way, a very effective means of putting critics on the defensive, by portraying them as hysterics. But the word "phobia" describes irrational fears. One may suffer from a phobia regarding moths, but to fear potential terrorists is a different matter altogether.

Of course, I'm not speaking about those who assign collective guilt to all Muslims and Islam. One can differentiate between such odious people and those who have genuine concerns. After all, does anyone assume that opposing Nazism meant condemning all Germans?

The frustration felt by many who chafe at this political correctness and self-imposed censorship has led to the explosion of blogs. They have become the modern Internet version of the *samizdat*, the clandestinely printed material that circulated in the old Communist states.

These self-published works include analyses of political events and often suggest alternatives to the government's handling of issues. Their proliferation today tells us something about our "official" media.

Ever since politicized radical Islam came to the fore in the 1970s, intellectuals on the left have lionized it as a new form of anti-capitalist "liberation." In 1978, Michel Foucault, an academic god in most university humanities departments, travelled to Tehran, then in the midst of revolution against the Shah.

"It is perhaps the first great insurrection against global systems," wrote Foucault of Avatollah Khomeini's rise, "the form of revolt that is the most modern and the most insane."

As the noted political philosopher Michael Walzer wrote recently in the American social democratic journal *Dissent*, "I frequently come across leftists who are more concerned with avoiding accusations of Islamophobia than they are with condemning Islamist zealotry."

They, he continued, "are so irrationally afraid of an irrational fear of Islam that they haven't been able to consider the very good reasons for fearing Islamist zealots and so they have difficulty explaining what's going on in the world."

Ideological hegemony does not require secret police or torture chambers to keep people in line. The media are perfectly happy to take the lead. ■

Henry Srebrnik is a professor of political science at the University of Prince Edward Island.

Making space for Jewish 'prosumers'

Daniel Held

Two innovations in Jewish education have recently struck a chord with me.

First, a new social startup called OneTable was created to welcome Jews to the "oldest new way to do Friday night." With the support of materials, invitations, a Shabbat coach, and an online platform, OneTable helps you – anyone – "Make connections. Make meaning. Make Shabbat dinner." OneTable Shabbat dinners are hosted by anyone – those who grew up making Shabbat and those for whom it's new – and anywhere – in homes, at friends' homes, in restaurants, outdoors, and elsewhere. The online platform helps hosts find guests and guests find hosts, and the support helps hosts craft meaningful Shabbat experiences that speak to them. In its first few months, hundreds have already participated in home-grown meals.

The second is PJ Our Way, a pilot project to extend PJ Library – which currently sends free children's books to kids aged six months to eight years – to children aged nine to 11. PJ Library's regular books are selected by a central committee of experts and mailed out, en masse, to 125,000 Jewish households each month. To my three-year-old, it doesn't matter that someone else is choosing the book. To nine-to-11-year-olds, however, it does. PJ Our Way has set up an interactive website to allow participants to choose the books that are right for them and to share their feedback with others. Through blogs, videos, and polls, kids can tell others about what they read, and make their own decisions about what to read themselves.

What strikes me about both of these initiatives – and plenty of others – is the emphasis on empowering participants as "prosumers" – to be both producers and consumers.

The term prosumer was coined as early as the 1970s, but only came into use with the development of Web 2.0 in the early 2000s. Web 1.0 is like a newspaper: information is produced by one person and consumed by others. Web 2.0 is based on user-generated content – videos posed on YouTube, tweets on Twitter, posts on Facebook and maps generated on Google Maps. A prosumer both produces and consumes content or experiences. Increasingly, young Jews are demanding the ability to play an active role as prosumers of Jewish experiences, rather than passive consumers.

Hillel has been fostering the needs of prosumers for decades. Empowering university students to create their own services and Shabbat meals, advocacy social activities, part of Hillel's success in engaging young adults has been its trend-setting work in building prosumers. Similarly, UJA's Community Connect initiative has set up the infrastructure for young adults to plan and run programs for their peers.

Unfortunately, not all of our community organizations are equipped to serve the needs of prosumers. Supplementary schools that teach a prescribed curriculum without addressing students' interests, synagogue services that are performative rather than interactive, and organizations that lack transparency and forums for participant input and direction will all fail in a market driven by prosumers.

At its core, Judaism is designed for prosumers. OneTable captures this in leveraging of Shabbat meals. Chevrutah, the traditional form of text study in which partners challenge and ask questions of each other and the text, is another prime example. And, of course, the Passover seder, during which each of us imagines ourselves as if we left Egypt, is the primary example.

To succeed in engaging the next generation of Jews, we all must return to these prosumer roots. Our institutions must redeploy themselves as engines to propel the creativity of producers who will create high-value content that will be compelling enough to be consumed. At the same time, we need more new ideas – like OpenTable and PJ Our Way – that will reinvent the landscape of Jewish engagement for a new generation. ■

Daniel Held is executive director of the Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Chanukah, Hanukka, Hanukkah: how's that again?

Jean M. Gerber

Time to light the menorah for C/Han/nuk/ka – and do I add an "h"? There are several ways of spelling our holiday of national liberation. Maybe those variations are telling us something. I suggest we look deeper at what seems a simple, heroic story of national liberation.

The rabbis were wary of the Hasmonean dynasty. While it began with a victory over persecution from the Syrian Greeks, descendants of the original family turned their reign into typical oriental imperial rule, scooping up nearby provinces including Edom, from whose royal family came the blood-soaked Herod.

So the rabbinic frame of the holiday emphasized a miraculous lamp burning one day's oil for eight days.

But there's more to it. Judea was hardly unaware of the Hellenistic world, having been in its orbit since before the time of Alexander The Great (c. 323 BCE). Ruled first by the Egyptian Greeks, then the Seleucids based in Syria, ordinary Judeans saw Hellenistic cities all around them and heard spoken Greek, probably picking up enough to manage in daily life. It was not the Hellenistic world itself that began the crisis, but the increasingly assimilationist Jews that birthed opposition.

There is even dissent over who threw the first punch. Was it *after* the ascent of Antiochus Epiphanes, but *before* his attempt to crush out the religious rituals of the Jews that opposition arose? Was there already armed opposition to Greek rule before the edicts? Hellenists among the Jews had bribed their way to the high priesthood, and as far as Antiochus was concerned, he had won the Judean part of his kingdom over to his ideals. Did this surprise opposition, then, give rise to his persecutions and the Maccabean revolt?

Or was it his fault? Did he begin the quarrel by summarily imposing draconian decrees against circumcision, the Temple sacrifices, Shabbat observance, etc. immediately after he ascended the throne?

In the end, the Maccabees met the enemy – and some of them were other Jews. The ruling elite had already taken on many aspects of the Hellenistic world. So why would such a fierce advocate of a unified Hellenistic kingdom as Antiochus *not* expect everyone to follow in their train?

Unfortunately for the Greeks, there was unrest at home, an enemy at the emperor's back, and the traditional massed Greek army tactics were useless against the raid and run tactics of the Jews.

Still, it was touch and go. The Maccabees were leading a guerrilla army against Jewish Hellenizers as well as against Greek armies. The miracle was not just that they prevailed, but that they wrested back control of the country from some of its own people! As time went on, sadly, the Hasmonean dynasty fought brother against brother, fell out with the emerging rabbinic class, and eventually lost Judea to the Romans.

Yet Judaism itself was changed by its encounter with Greeks. For instance, note the thousands of Greek words in the Mishnah, and Greek names of the rabbis. Synagogues all over Judea/Palestine are decorated with pagan iconography, such as the zodiac, and even portray God Himself. Too, synagogues themselves were built on a Greco-Roman plan. Deeper than merely decorative art (which tells its own story) modes of rabbinic argument may have been borrowed from the Greek system of debate.

In fact, the situation in Judea is much like ours today in the West. We speak the local language, not Hebrew; most of us dress like everyone else; we read the same books, listen to the same music, go to the same movies, and so on. Happily, we are free from oppressive government persecution.

I'm not raining on the parade – I love latkes and sufganiyot, too, and of course the simple tale works for the *kinder*. But adults should be responsive to the whole story. Give ourselves time, while the kids are opening their gifts, to probe deeper into the historical ambiguities. No matter how we spell them. ■

Islamism: extremism, not material deprivation, is the problem

Paul Michaels

A week after the Paris attacks, Doug Saunders, the *Globe and Mail*'s international affairs columnist, raised what he called "one of the crucial questions of our age": why most immigrant communities "succeed" while a few produce "marginal, dangerous patterns" including "violent extremists."

He argued, in a lengthy feature based on a year-long international studies project, that material structural factors – economic improvement, including small business opportunities, better schooling, housing, and enhanced transportation, which currently vary almost district by district in Belgium – would create conditions for successful integration that "can avert extremism before it starts."

Ideological factors, such as extremist religious fervour and indoctrination – versions of radical Islam – played no part in Saunders' analysis. There is no reference to individuals, even when their material circumstances are favourable, making moral choices – especially extremist and violent ones.

Nor is there any account of why many immigrant communities around the world lacking such material conditions for successful integration have not turned to terrorism – a word, along with "Islamic," that Saunders avoids.

In contrast to Saunders, mere days after the Paris carnage, renowned French writer and philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy told *Globe and Mail* readers in an opinion piece that it is wrong to view the assailants as marginalized.

Levy was asked in a *Ha'aretz* interview: "All the terrorists who have been identified were disciples of extremist Islam. To what extent should France do more to guarantee better integration of its Muslim citizens into society?"

Levy responded: "Of course the problem of integration hasn't been solved and of course it must be solved. But I'm not willing to accept the link implied by your question between it and jihadism. Those who perpetrated the attacks in France are not *les misérables*. They aren't people who suffered from [failed] integration. It's important to oppose this connection, this correlation, because they're mistaken."

Ha'aretz added that Levy mentioned, as examples, both Mohamed Atta, leader of the 9/11 attacks, who was not a marginalized immigrant in Germany, and former Briton "Jihadi John."

The role of religion and, particularly, religious extremism and indoctrination must be faced honestly, Levy argued. And he called upon the French government to ban imams who preach hate.

Reflecting on the Paris attacks, *New York Times* columnist David Brooks cited a new book by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence*, in which, according to Brooks, Rabbi Sacks "argues that ISIS is in fact typical of what we will see in the decades ahead. The 21st century will not be a century of secularism… It will be an age of desecularization and religious conflicts."

Religion, including Islam, is not itself inherently violent, but, as we're witnessing today with Islamists of one stripe or another, in extremist and politicized hands it can – and indeed has – become just that.

For Levy, the major religious conflict now is not between Islam and the West, but rather is a struggle within Islam itself, between what he calls the "enlightened" and the militantly radical or "fascist" visions of the faith. This "primordial opposition," as he terms it, is "the only clash of civilization that matters." And it cuts several ways: between Sunni and Shia branches, as well as between various rival Sunni factions.

While ISIS now monopolizes global attention, let's not forget that the dominant Shia power in the region, the "Islamic Republic" of Iran, is designated by the U.S. State Department as the primary state sponsor of terrorism in the world.

Iran's Lebanon-based proxy, Hezbollah, and Iran's own Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force (both listed by Canada as banned terrorist entities), have long been aiding Syrian President Bashar Assad, backed by Russia, in the slaughter of his own people. They've contributed immensely to the deaths of more than 200,000 Syrians, far exceeding ISIS' grim toll.

No wonder maverick Algerian writer Boualem Sansal predicted recently that Iran, bent on becoming the regional hegemon, will soon dominate a tormented, increasingly fractured Sunni Arab Middle East. ■

News

Trudeau government backs Israel at United Nations

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In the first test of its support for Israel in international forums, the new Liberal government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has voted against a raft of Arab-sponsored United Nations resolutions targeting the Jewish state.

The anti-Israel resolutions are non-binding and are introduced around this time every year. Most have been or will be adopted first by committees of the UN, then voted on at a plenary of the General Assembly.

Canada abstained or voted against all the measures in committee, standing with Israel, the United States and the tiny Pacific island nations of the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Palau. Canada's votes were unchanged from last year, continuing a more Israel-friendly shift at the UN that began with former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin and continued under former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper.

On Nov. 24, the UN adopted six of the resolutions, drafted by the Palestinians and Syria. These skipped committees and went directly to a plenary of the General Assembly. Canada voted against all of them.

They included calls to "promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-state solution on the basis of the pre-1967 border."

Another expressed "grave concern about the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities in the occupied Palestinian territory… including on the contiguity, integrity and viability of the territory."

One resolution noted "that any actions taken by Israel, the occupying power, to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem are illegal and therefore null and void and have no validity whatsoever, and calls upon Israel to immediately cease all such illegal and unilateral measures."

Another said Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights – referred to as "the Syrian Golan" – is a "stumbling block in the way of achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region."

The Geneva-based group UN Watch "applauded" the Trudeau government for its votes and "for being on track to continue without change Canada's policy of firmly opposing repetitive, disproportionate and one-sided resolutions… that are designed to delegitimize Israel, the Middle East's only democracy."

Canada's voting record is "entirely unchanged from last year," UN Watch pointed out. "This upholds the UN Charter's principle of equal treatment of all nations, and prejudice to none."

Still, Hillel Neuer, UN Watch executive director, lashed out at the passage of the half-dozen anti-Israel resolutions.

"Surreal barely captures the scene whereby the world is under assault by terrorists killing in the name of Islam and martyrhood – as Palestinians are doing while stabbing Israeli Jews – and the UN's response is to

Justin Trudeau at the Munk Debate

reflexively condemn Israel in six separate resolutions, all of which are one-sided," Neuer wrote on the UN Watch website.

On the resolution that condemned Israel for retaining the Golan and demanding its return to Syria, Neuer said: "It's astonishing. At a time when the Syrian regime is massacring its own people, how can the UN call for more people to be subject to [President Bashar] Assad's rule? The timing of [the] text is morally galling and logically absurd."

The "farce" at the world body, he added, "underscores a simple fact: the UN's automatic majority has no interest in truly helping Palestinians, nor in protecting anyone's human rights. The goal of these ritual, one-sided condemnations remains the scapegoating of Israel."

UN committees recently passed 13 other resolutions, all targeting Israel. Canada abstained on two and voted no on 11. A 20th, "Assistance to the Palestinian people," will be considered later this month. The remaining motions are expected to be passed by the General Assembly by mid-December, Neuer told *The CJN*.

Canada's votes "speak to Prime Minister Trudeau's commitment that he's reiterated time and again that his government will continue the multi-partisan support for Israel that characterized the previous government," said Noah Shack, director of public policy at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

One-sided anti-Israel resolutions "not only denigrate Israel but the UN itself," Shack added. Ottawa's stance this time "is bigger than just a symbolic show of support from Canada. This is a statement of support for the UN and for fairness for Israel."

Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal) and Michael Levitt (York Centre), two of six new Jewish Liberal MPs, praised their government's votes. "We are pleased to recognize that the government of Canada led by Prime Minister Trudeau has demonstrated its continued support for Israel's security, democracy, and stability by maintaining our country's UN voting record on Israel," they said in a statement Nov. 26.

"We will persist in opposing initiatives that vilify or single out Israel, including the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement," they added.

"We call upon the United Nations to stop this annual attempt to vilify and demonize Israel, and we hope this year will be the last year we need to vote on these resolutions."

The Israeli Embassy in Ottawa declined to comment on the votes, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada did not respond to requests for comment by *The CJN*'s deadline. ■

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B'nai Brith dementia home creditors left high and dry

PAUL LUNGEN
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One Kenton Alzheimer's Centre of Excellence (One Kenton) and B'nai Brith Hillel of Toronto were declared bankrupt last week after failing to make a proposal to creditors by a court-imposed deadline of Nov. 23.

B'nai Brith Hillel was found to have liabilities of nearly $11 million, while One Kenton owed nearly $90,000, according to records from the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada.

The bankruptcies likely mean that more than two dozen of One Kenton's unsecured creditors will receive little or nothing, despite the sale of the facility last month.

At the same time, Isaac Weinroth, One Kenton's original executive director, has also been left high and dry in a separate court claim of $140,000 for unjust dismissal. His case was subject to a stay of proceedings in June after One Kenton and B'nai Brith Hillel sought court protection from creditors.

The bankruptcies are the latest developments in a series of events that have marked the decline of what had been billed as a first-class facility offering state-of-the-art care for those suffering from Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. One Kenton opened in December 2013 to much fanfare and with a $5.4-million federal government grant to support it. It was the brainchild of former B'nai Brith Canada CEO Frank Dimant and other members of the B'nai Brith board. The facility was constructed on two plots of land at 1 and 3 Kenton Place, owned by B'nai Brith Hillel, and offered 45 beds, charging residents more than $7,500 a month.

One Kenton Alzheimer's Centre of Excellence opened in 2013. GOOGLE STREETVIEW PHOTO

B'nai Brith Hillel is a non-profit corporation headquartered at 15 Hove St., the same address as B'nai Brith Canada. Its officers and directors are current and former B'nai Brith Canada personnel, including Dimant, its vice-president, and Gerry Weinstein, a former B'nai Brith Canada national president, who is president of B'nai Brith Hillel.

One Kenton was never more than half full, and as of two weeks ago, it was home to only 19 people.

One Kenton sought court protection from its creditors in June, when it became clear that its debts far exceeded its income and it was rapidly running out of money.

The trustee was tasked with, in part, finding a buyer for the facility.

Two weeks ago, One Kenton was acquired by One Kenton Memory Care Limited Partnership, a new entity that will continue to operate the facility as an Alzheimer's residence. It is headed by Avi Gottlieb, the president of Avcon Construction, the company that built One Kenton and held a second mortgage on the property.

Weinroth was hired to serve as the facility's new executive director.

Gottlieb declined to reveal the purchase price, and neither Michael Mostyn, CEO of B'nai Brith Hillel, B'nai Brith Canada and One Kenton, nor Farber & Associates, the trustee overseeing the facility, responded to *CJN* requests for an interview.

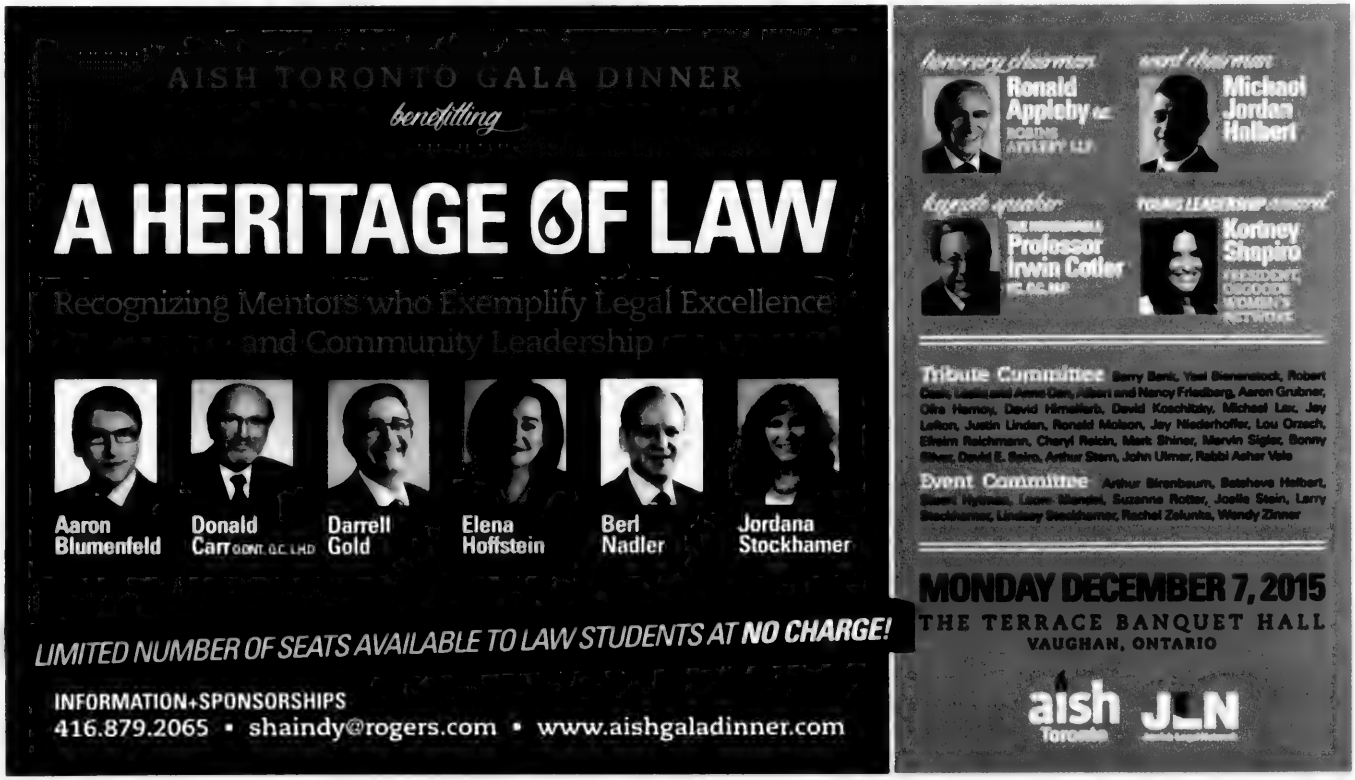
Whether there is any money to pay Weinroth or the creditors listed in court documents remains to be seen. Two meetings of the creditors of One Kenton and B'nai Brith Hillel are set for Dec. 15.

Weinroth said he had been told by the trustee not to expect any funds.

Shlomo Assayag said he is unaware of any proposal to creditors. His company, KosherMeats2U, which provides meats, poultry, cold cuts and other items to retail and wholesale customers, is owed $1,551.56. "My understanding is that the money is gone," he said.

KosherMeats2U has continued to supply One Kenton with food, and it has been paid since June.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



Jerusalem Foundation head envisions city as cultural hub

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Yohanna Arbib, the new president of the Jerusalem Foundation and a woman who has made Jewish activism a priority in her life since she was a teenager, was in Toronto last week to introduce herself to current and potential donors.

The Italian-born and raised Arbib immersed herself in Jewish leadership when she was just 16, with Keren Hayesod, Israel's central fundraising arm.

"Israel has always played a major role in my life since I was a child. My family had left Libya in 1948. They left because the situation for Jews wasn't as good as it used to be and I think throughout my family history, I realized that Israel is the centre of Jewish life and Israel is the only country that can guarantee the future of the Jewish People," Arbib told *The CJN* during her visit to Toronto late last month.

"Having understood that, and I'm a very passionate person, I realize that what I wanted to do in life is to be a part of the history of the Jewish People and to play my role and my part in making Israel relevant, strong, and in unifying the forces of Am Yisrael around the world."

After years of serving a number of roles in Keren Hayesod and making a name for herself as a Jewish leader, in 2009 Arbib became the youngest chair of the organization's world board of trustees.

She has held top leadership roles with other organizations including Aleh, an Israeli organization that serves the disabled, as well as the Jewish Agency for Israel, before being named as Jerusalem Foundation's president earlier this year.

Arbib, a businesswoman and philanthropist, said she is eager to leave her mark on the 50-year-old organization that has, to date, raised more than $1 billion to develop museums and film festivals, commercial development and scientific discovery, as well as promote civil society and social justice in the Old City for people of all ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

"We want to create the circumstances in Jerusalem whereby Jerusalem becomes an attractive place for tourism. Clearly culture plays a big role and the museums and the cultural centres we support as a foundation make Jerusalem an important cultural hub in Israel, but also internationally," she said.

During her two-day visit, Arbib met with donors and volunteers of the foundation's

Yohanna Arbib and Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat

Toronto chapter, and invited them to be part of the 50th anniversary celebration and campaign planned for next year.

Arbib said part of her mission is to raise awareness about the work the foundation does for Jerusalem, which, in turn, benefits Israel, and the Jewish community around the world. "We feel that the foundation has a unique role in making Jerusalem a city that is for the well-being of its citizens – to attract international tourism, to be the home and centre of Jewish life, but also to be a city of peace and serve as a model for humanity as a whole," she said.

She said the current wave of terror Israel is facing doesn't inhibit its efforts. Rather, it strengthens the mission of the foundation.

"The foundation caters to the entire population of Jerusalem, from the ultra-Orthodox, to the Arabs, to the secularists, to the religious. What we're dealing with today actually strengthens the mission of the foundation because it underlines the fact that all of the Jerusalem residents need to be given opportunities for a better life."

She said the foundation aims to cater to all of Jerusalem's diverse needs.

"Culture, together with education, with heritage, with taking care of the vulnerable and the economic instability – these are the areas where the foundation is present. Cultural institutions in times of crisis can work as a bridge to try to lead a normal life," she said.

"We see the situation... since the Paris attack, we see what is happening in Europe – in France, in Belgium, in Italy. People are very scared and they don't know how to tackle the situation. I think the resilience of the people of Jerusalem during this wave of terror, they understand how to tackle a situation of emergency, and their answer to terror is that life must go on," she said, adding that the foundation started an emergency campaign to support underprivileged youth and cultural institutions that suffer most during tense periods. ■

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Adam Cutler, Beth Tzedec Congregation
Jordan Helfman, Holy Blossom Temple
Miriam Margles, Danforth Jewish Circle

Moderator

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Rabbi seeks owner of Torah crowns he found on bus

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Rabbi Hartley Perlmutter was surprised recently when he stepped onto a TTC bus, paid his fare and began to make his way to the back of the nearly empty bus.

"As I neared the back, I noticed something metallic shining on one of the seats in the back row," Rabbi Perlmutter told *The CJN*.

"Intrigued, I moved closer and realized that lying on the seat was a pair of silver Torah rimonim, or crowns," added Rabbi Perlmutter, 27, who teaches at Bnei Akiva Schools.

Looking around the almost-empty bus travelling in the Wilson Avenue and Bathurst Street area, only one person sat near the rear of the vehicle. Rabbi Perlmutter lifted the rimonim to see if the passenger near the back of the bus would indicate ownership.

"But all I got was a blank look."

He said his mind began to race.

"Where were they from? Who left them here? Why were they being taken –perhaps for maintenance? Stolen? In the process of being donated? Why were they not wrapped up and protected?"

An inscription suggests the crowns are more than 100 years old.

> *Where were they from? Who left them here?*

After examining the rimonim, which are used to adorn Torah cases that house the Torah scrolls and the handles of Torah rollers of both Ashkenazi and Sephardi Sefer Torah scrolls, Rabbi Perlmutter realized from the inscription that they were more than 100 years old.

The markings in Hebrew script describe the circumstances under which the rimonim were originally donated.

He believes the rimonim are made of actual silver, as they are tarnished. Beyond that, he doesn't want to reveal more about the items or where and when they were found, "in order to use that information to verify that the person is telling the truth."

Recalling stories of individuals who used social media to post lost and found items on Facebook, Rabbi Perlmutter posted a picture of the rimonim and urged as many people as possible to share the post in the hope their owner would eventually see the posts.

Rabbi Perlmutter noted, "I included a caption on the post that said, 'I just found a pair of Torah Rimonim on a TTC bus. Anyone with info to help me return these to their owner would be appreciated. Please share to spread the word.'"

"To date, the post has been shared 75 times, but the owner still remains a mystery," Rabbi Perlmutter said. "So I thought *The CJN* could help send out the message of the lost rimonim." ■

If you have any information about the rimonim, please contact rimoniminfo@gmail.com.

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GUEST VOICE

Make no mistake about it, European anti-Semitism is back

Donald Carr

The latest in a long series of discriminatory actions by the European Union (EU) against Israel is the implementation of a requirement of distinguishing labels on goods and produce shipped to Europe by Israel from the disputed territories. A further distinction is to be made between those items of "Palestinian origin" and those of "Israeli origin." Such a step clearly encourages the public of all states which are part of the EU to boycott products which have an Israeli origin.

This is reminiscent of the early days of the Nazis. Placing restrictions on Jewish businesses was the forerunner of ever increasing discrimination of the Jews and the ultimate attempt to eliminate them.

As proof of the logical result of this new requirement, a Berlin department store withdrew all Israeli goods from its shelves, explaining that it would sort out what came from the territories and put the goods back after proper labelling. The store only made the decision to put all the goods back on its shelves after public pressure began to mount.

Such orders from the EU also encourage those who clamour for a boycott of all Israeli products and of any interaction with the Jewish State – the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement, whose intent is to demonize and totally isolate Israel, with the ultimate aim of wiping it out.

Based on its preoccupation with the Jewish State, the EU appears to be fast becoming very similar to the United Nations, where it is an accepted fact that there is an automatic anti-Israel vote for all resolutions presented to the General Assembly.

With so many rogue states in this world, and with the ongoing occupation of so many neighbouring lands by other states, one might reasonably ask the EU: why this outlandish concentration on Israel? Recently in the *New York Times*, Eugene Kontorovich pointed out that the EU continues to accept produce labelled as "Moroccan," even when it comes from West Sahara, illegally occupied by Morocco since 1975.

(It is to be noted that such distinguishing requirements, by law, cannot be employed in Ontario and Quebec. The Ontario government under former premier Bill Davis enacted the Discriminatory Business Practices Act many years ago, back when the Arab League was attempting to require certificates of origin for items shipped to Arab countries, in an effort to exclude products made in Israel. Quebec and Manitoba followed suit.)

It is true that European nations are not generally considered to have the same predilections as those states which control the General Assembly of the UN. Why then does the EU reserve separate and "special" treatment for the Jewish State?

One is inevitably drawn to the conclusion recently enunciated by at least two prominent American commentators, who belong to disparate sides of the political spectrum – syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer and lawyer/commentator Alan Dershowitz. Both are certain we are experiencing (note, not "witnessing") the resurgence of the anti-Semitism that stalked Europe for almost 1,900 years.

History books are replete with the endless discrimination against Jews and their businesses, the pogroms as well as other pernicious assaults and slaughter. After the results of the Nazi Final Solution, with all of its barbarous torture, dehumanizing and murder of millions, were revealed, the world was shocked, and for a time it was temporarily inappropriate to demonstrate hatred of the Jews. The culmination of centuries of wanton, irrational hatred – state organized, but willingly abetted by so many citizens of occupied European countries – caused anti-Semitism to be hidden for a while. But that "while" is now over. And we Jews had better realize it.

Europe, with the exception of well-intentioned individuals and, prominently, the Czech Republic, is revisiting the elimination of Jewry, only now it is concentrated on the new scapegoat – Zionism/Israel. Spurred on by Arab and Islamist encouragement, hiding behind the condemnation of "occupation," "persecution," "withdrawal of human rights," "apartheid" and other spurious calumnies, the EU is applying a double standard, or a standard where none applies to others. It's time to face facts: Europe is re-occupying its traditional place as the breeder and feeder of anti-Semitism. Make no mistake about it. ■

Donald Carr is chairman emeritus of The Canadian Jewish News.

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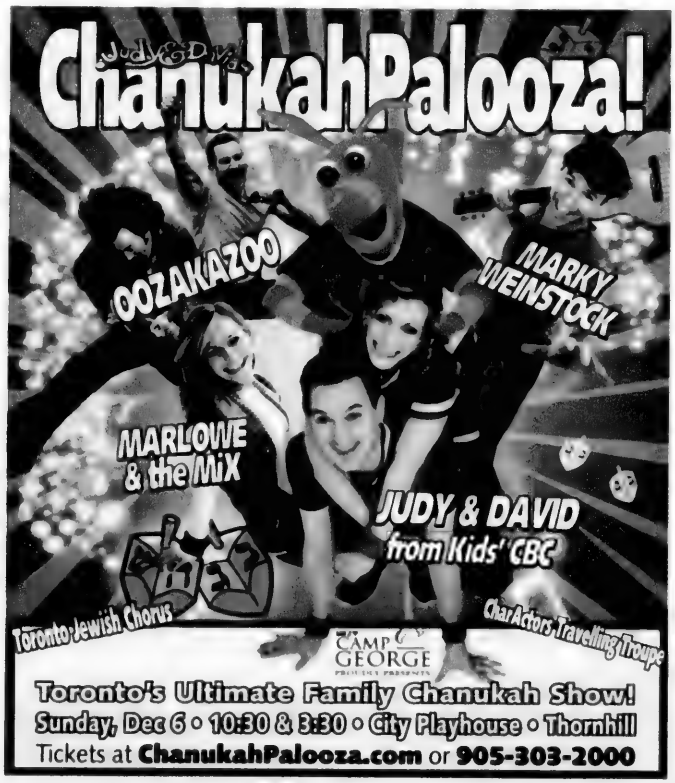

GUEST VOICE

Jewish-Muslim dialogue begins with a simple question

Michael Diamond

The question of Islamist terrorism has become a primary focus of late, and due to the dramatically evil manifestations of Islam's most extreme adherents, the dominant emotion pervading many of these discussions has been fear. Fear of the known, and of the unknown.

On a rational basis, the fears are justified. But much of our fear is based on ignorance of the "other," because the level of dialogue between Muslims and Jews has been limited.

The resulting ignorance of Muslim beliefs and practices is not useful for our Canadian society. Ignorance begets fear. Fear can lead to behaviour that may simply create a self-fulfilling prophesy. If we behave as if we expect every member of a particular group to be an extremist, then we create conditions that increase the likelihood of that taking place.

Reduction of ignorance requires learning. That in turn suggests that we look for opportunities for dialogue. There are nascent organizations working to do just that. Recently, Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto hosted an evening of Muslim-Jewish dialogue with the catchy title "We Refuse to be Enemies." To have such dialogue can only help us to understand the "other." And if what we learn turns out to be that much less problematic than that which generates our fears, then ignorance reduces and fear subsides.

Of course the reverse is also true: if we learn that the naysayers are indeed correct, and that there are Islamist cells in Canada, ready to be awoken, and that there are imams preaching hatred and violence in our neighbourhoods, then our fears would justifiably increase. Either way, knowledge through dialogue and other forms of learning is the pathway.

Yet, I wonder whether there should be certain conditions that accompany such dialogue. I believe there is a core question that should be asked and answered in any case of public dialogue between Jews and Muslims. Namely, does the individual who intends to participate in the dialogue with us accept Israel's right to exist as a nation among other nations?

If the answer to what ought to be a relatively innocuous question is yes, then there is a basis to have a useful dialogue, because the individuals in question have clearly accepted our legitimacy as a people by accepting the legitimacy of Israel.

But if the answer is no, then the dialogue may be counter-productive.

After all, while dialogue can generate knowledge, it is also meant as a way to build a relationship that can foster greater understanding between peoples. If one does not accept the legitimacy of the other, then there is no relationship to be had.

We Jews are only too quick to accommodate the other in order to be accepted, perhaps because we are such a small group and because millennia of abuse at the hands of others have left us constantly looking over our collective shoulders. However, it is in that willingness to over-accommodate that we often weaken ourselves.

On the other hand, if we set up preconditions to dialogue, we cannot begin to break down the barriers that the dialogue is intended to eliminate. It is indeed a conundrum.

We need to draw the line somewhere and avoid unconditional dialogue. And I think we are entitled, perhaps obligated, to ask about Israel's right to exist so that we know what and who we are dealing with, particular where the dialogue is a part of a public event.

The same question might also be asked in private relationships and discussions. Shouldn't you, as a Jew who values your people, and sees Israel as a core piece of the Jewish puzzle, want to know the answer to this core question from those non-Jews with whom you interact? I would, and have asked the question. Wouldn't you? ■

Michael Diamond is a business consultant, entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist. He is involved extensively in Jewish and non-Jewish community life and sits on or chairs several boards and committees of a number of non-profit organizations.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 3, 2015

Toronto-born rabbi installed at Ottawa's lone Reform shul

DIANE KOVEN
OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT

A full weekend of festivities surrounded the recent installation last month of Rabbi Rob Morais at Temple Israel, Ottawa's only Reform synagogue.

Coming to Ottawa directly from Michigan, where he served as spiritual leader of Temple Beth Israel in Jackson and as director of the Jewish children's museum in Detroit, Rabbi Morais, 47, is originally from Toronto. He has had a long association with Rabbi Steven Garten, who served Temple Israel, a congregation of about 300 member families, for 18 years and who will continue his involvement with the congregation as rabbi emeritus.

"I was blessed to have Rabbi Garten, Temple Israel's rabbi emeritus, participate in the installation service. I first got to know Rabbi Garten when he came to [Toronto's] Holy Blossom Temple the year before my bar mitzvah. Over the years, we have had many opportunities to work and study together as rabbinic colleagues. I am very grateful that as rabbi emeritus he will continue to play a vital role in the life of Temple Israel," Rabbi Morais said.

From left, rabbis Rob Morais, Laurence Kotok and Steven Garten ROBIN CHERNICK PHOTO

After being ordained at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in 1997, Rabbi Morais worked with Rabbi Garten at Camp George, the Reform movement summer camp in Ontario, for a number of years. The Camp George connection was felt during the Nov. 13 Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat service, attended by more than 200 congregants of all ages and led by the folk group The New Gershonites (Judy and David Gershon, and their son, Jared) who are known to many from their work at Camp George. Following a spirited, participatory, musical service, attendees enjoyed a vegetarian and dairy potluck dinner, and many stayed for an after-dinner sing-along as well.

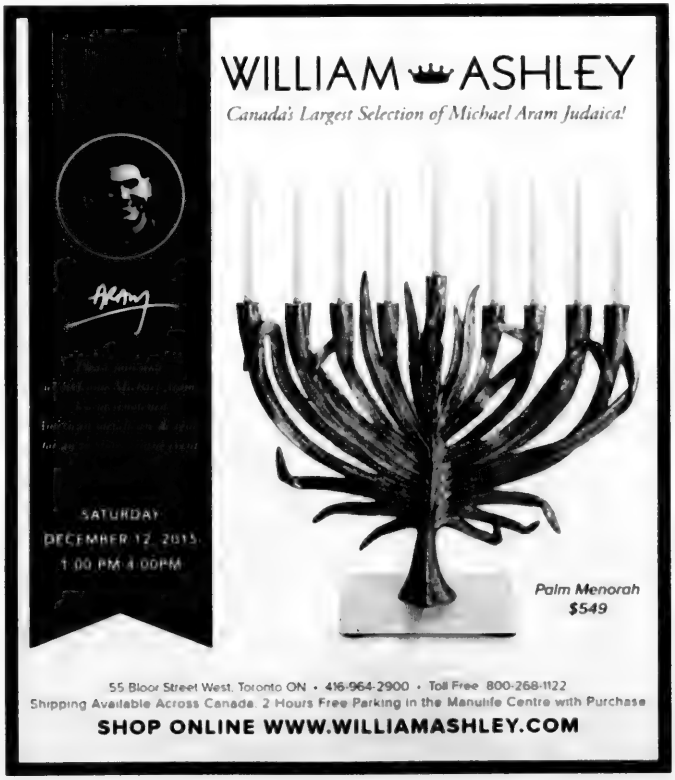
The installation of Rabbi Morais took place during Shabbat morning services the next day. Joining Rabbi Garten in officiating were rabbis Laurence Kotok and Sharon Sobel of New York, both of whom have played important roles in Rabbi Morais' spiritual and professional development, and who shared a number of anecdotes about him. Clergy from other local congregations as well as from churches and mosques attended the installation and service as well.

Following a kiddush luncheon, an adult education panel featuring Rabbi Morais, Rabbi Garten and the two guest rabbis discussed "What it means to be a Reform Jew today."

An open house on Sunday afternoon provided an opportunity for people to meet the new rabbi. Congregants Miriam Burke and Reg Angel co-chaired the installation weekend committee.

Said Rabbi Morais, "Over the coming months and years things are going to change, but…we are not going to change just for the sake of changing." He paraphrased *Pirkei Avot*, the sayings of our ancestors: "The day is short, there is much work to be done; sometimes people are reluctant to volunteer but the reward is great and the one who governs the heavens is pressing us to do our best."

According to temple past president Lorne Rachlis, who served on the rabbi selection committee, "This was a wonderful weekend, full of joy, enthusiasm, optimism and spirituality. Rabbi Morais' official welcoming weekend is a good omen of good things to come for Temple Israel." ■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Post-1948 Jewish refugees ignored, community event told

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The world knows all about the estimated 600,000 Arab refugees that resulted from Israel's 1948 War of Independence.

By contrast, how many are aware that 850,000 Jews were expelled from or fled Arab lands in the Middle East and North Africa during Israel's tumultuous birth?

The need to spread that less-well-known narrative was emphasized Sunday night at Adath Israel Congregation, where about 500 people gathered to hear first-hand accounts of the Jewish exodus 67 years ago and its ongoing implications.

The program took place on the eve of the day – Nov. 30 – that an Israeli law enacted last year set aside as a national day of commemoration for Jewish refugees from Arab lands and Iran. It also fell on Nov. 29, the day in 1947 when the United Nations approved the partition plan for the Palestine Mandate and the creation of a Jewish state.

Millennia-old Jewish communities from Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Iraq, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and other nations virtually disappeared in the ensuing hostilities of 1947-1948, the event heard, but provided the nascent Jewish state with more than half its immigration until 1951.

Of the total number of Jewish refugees, about 650,000 went to Israel, noted Sam Azoory, head of the Iraqi Jewish Association of Ontario, who put the total value of their abandoned property at $100 billion, a figure that was later revised to $300 billion. The value of property left by fleeing or expelled Arab populations in 1948, he said, is $3.9 billion.

Jewish-owned real estate left behind equalled an area four times the size of modern Israel, Azoory added.

Videotaped testimonies of Jews forced from their homes were played, and Prof. Ron Levi of the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs recalled the plight of his Egyptian-born parents who met in Israel. Ted Sokolsky, former UJA Federation of Greater Toronto CEO, made a pitch for Sephardi Voices, an organization that collects the oral testimonies of Jews displaced from North Africa, the Middle East and Iran.

Irwin Cotler
JENNILEE HEAD /CIJA PHOTO

Jordan Kerbel of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, left, speaks with Ron Levi, associate professor at the Munk School of Global Affairs. JENNILEE HEAD /CIJA PHOTO

The world continues to cling to the "false narrative" that 1948 produced only Arab refugees, stated keynote speaker Irwin Cotler, Canada's former justice minister and an international human rights advocate.

In 2012, Cotler proposed that the Canadian government officially recognize the plight of Jews who fled or were expelled from their homes in 1948. Following hearings, the House of Commons standing committee on foreign affairs and international development produced a 17-page report on the issue, and in March of last year, Canada accepted its recommendations, becoming only the second nation in the world after Israel to formally recognize the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab lands.

Cotler said the UN bears "express and continuing responsibility for a distorted Middle East narrative." He noted that since 1948, there have been more than 180 UN resolutions dealing with Palestinian refugees, "yet not one makes any reference to the plight of Jewish refugees."

As well, there are 10 major UN agencies spending billions on Palestinian refugees but none devoted to Jewish ones. The UN marked all of 2014, Cotler said, as a year of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

"So much for equal justice. It smacks, frankly, of UN apartheid," Cotler said to applause.

The time has come, "indeed it is long past, to restore the plight of this forgotten, forced exodus to the peace and justice narrative in the Middle East, from which it has been expunged."

In an "action plan" he proposed, Cotler called on the UN to include mention of Jewish refugees in its annual resolutions on displaced Palestinians, and to establish a document and research centre to tell "the 850,000 untold stories. These voices also have to be heard at the UN."

Cotler called on the UN Human Rights Council to address the issue of Jewish refugees and on international agencies to compensate them.

He said there is no need for a separate UN agency to deal only with Palestinian refugees. To applause, Cotler called for the transfer of the file from the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to the UN High Commission for Refugees.

As well, Arab countries and the Arab League "must acknowledge their double aggression" in launching the 1948 war against Israel and against their Jewish citizens. "The culture of impunity that has underpinned their silence must end."

All bilateral peace talks between Israel and Palestinians and all frameworks for peace proposed by the United States or the European Union must also include mention of Jewish refugees, Cotler added.

"The exclusion and denial of the rights of Jewish refugees from Arab countries continues to prejudice authentic negotiations between the parties, and a just and lasting peace," Cotler stated.

DJ Schneeweiss, Israel's consul general in Toronto, acknowledged that this is "a story never told well, neither to ourselves or the outside world. But the more we tell it, the more impact we can have. If we don't tell it, who will?"

The program was sponsored by several Jewish organizations, including B'nai Brith Canada, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the Israeli Consulate, Hillel Ontario, the Iraqi Jewish Association of Ontario and Stand With Us Canada. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 3, 2015

Quebec police to head search for Nazi-looted Stern art

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

The Sûreté du Québec (SQ) is now on the hunt for Nazi-looted art.

The provincial police force has taken over the files from U.S. law enforcement on the Max Stern Art Restitution Project.

This means it will be the SQ, rather than the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, that interacts with Interpol in the ongoing worldwide search for the hundreds of artworks the late German-born Dominion Gallery owner was forced to hand over to the Nazis in the 1930s.

Clarence Epstein, director of the Concordia University-based project, said a Canadian law enforcement unit makes more sense, given that the Stern estate and its three beneficiaries – Concordia, McGill University and the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University (CFHU) – are in this country.

Because of its expertise, the SQ handles art crimes investigations for all of Canada, he added.

While the Quebec force will not be investigating the whereabouts of the Stern art, it is now "the first point of contact" for other Interpol affiliates on this matter, Epstein explained.

Two officers from the SQ's economic crimes section, leader Lt. Alain Gaulin and Sgt. Alain Dumouchel, an artworks investigator, were on hand at an event held by the CFHU at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) on Nov. 23 to pay tribute to the project's work.

For the SQ, there is no statute of limitations on theft, unlike in Germany, where such a law continues to hamper the restitution of what are believed still to be a significant number of works from the Stern collection, Epstein said. Thanks to this protection, German private collectors and auction houses continue to generally be unco-operative in Stern estate claims.

Stern, who ran an art gallery in Düsseldorf before World War II, lost more than 400 works after the Nazis forced him out of business because he was Jewish. The final 200 were liquidated at a forced sale at Cologne's Lempertz auction house in 1937, after which Stern fled to England.

Sûreté du Québec officers Alain Dumouchel, left, and Alain Gaulin stand in front of an Andreas Achenbach painting, restituted to the Stern estate. JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

Despite his efforts, Stern himself only got back a limited number of works, thanks largely to the Canadian armed forces.

The project, which was launched in 2002, has grown into a global quest involving numerous parties in the art and legal spheres in Canada, the United States, Europe and elsewhere, Epstein stressed.

A total of 12 paintings have been recovered to date, the first in 2006. The 11th, the 1837 *Scandinavian Landscape* by Andreas Achenbach, was returned in 2013 to the Stern estate by an unidentified consigner after it was put up for auction in Germany.

The small, but valuable, work had remained in storage in Berlin until very recently, when the MMFA asked if it could borrow it, and it was on view at the event.

The most recently recovered is a self-portrait of the 19th-century Wilhelm von Schadow, which the City of Düsseldorf restituted last year. The painting is now on loan to the Düsseldorf City Museum, where it has been on display for several decades.

The museum, with the collaboration of Concordia, is planning for 2018 a major exhibition dedicated to Max Stern (1904-1987) and the Galerie Stern, which was founded by his father Julius.

The MMFA is also currently showing Franz Xavier Winterhalter's 19th-century masterpiece *Girl From the Sabine Mountains*, restituted in 2008, but only after a legal battle. Its elderly possessor, a German baroness living in Rhode Island who had inherited it from her father, went to court to keep it.

Not only did the Stern estate win the case, but the ruling set a legal precedent in the United States. A Federal Court established that art that its owners sold under duress from the Nazis is stolen property and allows law enforcement agencies to seize such property on U.S. soil.

That was how the project's database came under the purview of Homeland Security. The project, however, continues to work closely with the New York State Holocaust Claims Processing Office.

Six of the 12 recovered pieces have been sold, Epstein said, with the proceeds going back into the project, which will carry on indefinitely. Others are on loan to museums in the Netherlands and Germany.

The project's chief investigator is the high-profile Washington-based art hunter Willi Korte.

Besides seeing justice done, the project's aim is educational: raising awareness about Nazi-looted art and, more broadly, the Holocaust.

A documentary film about Nazi-plundered art, focusing on Stern's story, is now in production in Canada at the initiative of the CFHU and the project.

Directed and written by Phyllis Ellis, *Stolen* is to be shown around the world through Hebrew U's Vidal Sassoon International Centre for the Study of Anti-Semitism, said Sissy Federer, one of the film's executive producers.

Subtitled *The Last Prisoners of War*, the film will bring attention to the fact that most of the 650,000 artworks confiscated by the Nazis have not been restored to their rightful owners.

Stern was a generous benefactor of the MMFA during his lifetime, noted Iris Amizlev, curator of world cultures and intercultural programs, donating more than 50 works there, including the large Henry Moore sculpture on view at the event. ■

SeeJN | Shaarei Tefillah Tzedakah Shalva

Shaarei Tefillah Congregation has created Toronto's largest – and most colourful – tzedakah box. Built by longtime member Ross Meltzer and decorated by the hand prints of young members, the synagogue is collecting funds for SHALVA, the Association for Mentally and Physically Challenged Children in Israel.

People are losing jobs in oil, related industries

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

And that could have an effect going forward. "There could be a change next summer, a softening in [camp] numbers if they continue the way they are," she predicted.

"I'm hearing a lot more stories telling of friends and family being laid off," Preston continued. "Those people are losing their jobs in the oil industry, banking, related industries, like electricians and plumbers."

"So far the impact hasn't been great, but we're only just starting to feel the effects," she added.

Hold on, said Calgary lawyer Gordon Hoffman. Things are not that bad.

"We're still fine. We're still busy," he said of his law firm.

Furthermore, there hasn't been a major impact on the Jewish community, he added. There have been some layoffs, he acknowledged, but that happens even in good times, along with bankruptcies, he said.

"It's a cyclical economy. Up and down. This is the engine of the country. We'll be busy again," he said.

Hoffman, who's held a variety of senior positions in Jewish organizations, said Albertans are coping with the situation and "there are lots of people who are busy."

"We have a great province," he said, "with charitable people and caring people."

They are stepping up to help those less fortunate than themselves. Charitable giving is up, he said.

"Sure there are concerns, but the people who have the wherewithal are standing up to fill the breach," he said.

The federation's Shapiro believes the community's major fundraising effort this year shouldn't be too affected by the oil recession.

Last year, the community raised about $2.9 million, and "it looks like we're on target to raise the same or a bit more," she said.

Meanwhile, the community's Integrated Bursary Program, which provides funds to families who need help to pay for Jewish schools, camps, youth groups and education programs, has seen a jump in requests.

"This year, we had 83 applicants, as compared to 77 last year – close to an eight per cent increase," she said.

A lot of that demand was driven by newly arrived immigrant families, many from Russia, by way of Israel. "They picked a really bad time to come to Calgary," Shapiro said.

Based on what she's hearing from friends and colleagues, there will be "a trickle down" effect from the downturn. "It is only now being felt."

With layoffs beginning in earnest in September, you can expect less spending, a drop in real estate values, less spending in the service industry and then more layoffs yet again, she said.

It's a vicious circle, but it's still fairly early in that process.

"I don't think we've seen the bottom," she said.

Hornstein said JFSC staff are seeing some of the most troubling manifestations of a slumping economy. Some of those let go from well-paying jobs are now suffering depression, anxiety and worse.

Lynne Preston

"We've seen an increase in the last few months in the incidence of domestic violence," he said.

Still, the numbers are not really high. Altogether, 12 families are seeking counseling within the JFSC system for issues including domestic violence, housing arrangements and help with the legal system.

"I told our annual meeting that our customer base is going up by 15 per cent," Hornstein said.

As for revenue to help pay for the increased demand for services, prospects don't look too good right now. Currently, JFSC receives 10 per cent of its funding from the city of Calgary, 20 per cent from the community's UJA campaign and another 20 per cent from the United Way, which is expecting to see a drop in the funds it raises.

> *I'm hearing a lot more stories telling of friends and family being laid off.*

The remaining 50 per cent comes from grants, foundation gifts and fundraising the agency does on its own.

"Fundraising is going to be a challenge," Hornstein said.

In Edmonton, fundraising in both the UJA and United Way campaigns "are in full swing, both being important sources for our work as well as indicators of community philanthropy in general," Derkach said.

"Last year both campaigns did well, and while concerns have been raised about the potential impact of the economy, I have not heard alarm bells yet. I believe Edmonton's economy has not been as hard hit as Calgary's, and sectors other than oil and gas are doing well.

"But even so, it is important to remember that the more vulnerable people in society – those with the lower end jobs, with no savings, with limited job and English skills, with family or health complications – are always among those who suffer first, and that includes those in our own Jewish community who come to Jewish Family Services," he said. ■

B'nai Brith has 'a moral and ethical responsibility'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

But any debt accrued before that "is pretty much lost, from the last time I heard, about a week ago," Assayag told *The CJN* last week.

According to court documents, B'nai Brith Hillel had debts in June totalling $10.9 million. At the top of the list are secured creditors, who are paid in priority to unsecured creditors.

The Bank of Nova Scotia held a first mortgage of $8 million, of which more than $7.3 million was still owing. The bank had advanced another $500,000 in a credit facility that was implemented in June.

In addition, the trustee and its legal counsel incurred bills of around $300,000, most of which had been paid by early November.

Among the unsecured creditors of One Kenton, with claims of $250 or more are ACE INA Life Insurance, $1,017.36; Bond Securcom, $2,555.21; Dr. Ilana Horvath, $1,000; Ecolab, $2,100.95; Green House Processing & Marketing, $1,869.75; Isaac's Bakery, $1,213.90; Kosher City Plus, $413.90; KosherMeats2U, $1,551.56; R.L. Landscaping, $6,045.50; Rochelle Berg, $1,734.08; The BAMM Group, $45,251.25; Veritas Investments, $5,121.16; and Pearl Gladman, whose given address at 15 Hove St. is the same as B'nai Brith Canada's headquarters, $2,500.00.

Isaac Weinroth

B'nai Brith Hillel's creditors include B'nai Brith Canada itself, which is listed in court documents as being owed nearly $1.6 million; B'nai Brith Congregation Synagogue, $16,666.00; B'nai Brith Foundation District 11, $24,195.00; and the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith, $5,310.25.

The Canada Revenue Agency has bills outstanding of $650,000.

Weinroth is frustrated with the turn of events that has left him with a claim of $140,000 that remains unaddressed, plus substantial legal fees.

He believes that it should never have come to this and that B'nai Brith Canada has a moral and ethical responsibility to compensate him, since One Kenton was always a B'nai Brith project.

According to Weinroth, he was let go in April 2014 and was not provided sufficient severance. Attempts at mediation proved unsuccessful and he filed his claim in September 2014, well before One Kenton's court-sanctioned restructuring efforts.

Weinroth said he saw the writing on the wall when One Kenton sought court protection from creditors – he did not expect to receive what he believes is owing to him.

Nevertheless, "they have a moral and ethical responsibility to resolve my case and provide me with the severance I'm entitled to," he said.

"I should have received a severance package on April 10, at the same time I got a letter saying I was terminated…I think for an organization that claims it looks out for human rights and social advocacy, it's not leading by example," he said. ■

INTERNATIONAL

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ANALYSIS

The battle over EU settlement labelling has just begun

RAPHAEL AHREN
JERUSALEM

The fight over the European Union's (EU) labelling for settlements goods is far from over.

On Nov. 29, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the Foreign Ministry to reassess the organization's role in the peace process, ordering diplomats to suspend all contacts with EU institutions until that process is completed. But most European governments, unimpressed with what they see as Israeli posturing, have been readying to implement the controversial measure.

Most, but not all. While the European Commission's instructions to mark Israeli goods from outside the pre-1967 lines are mandatory for all 28 member states, at least one country has repeatedly vowed to defy them.

"We do not support that decision," Hungary's Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Péter Szijjártó declared last month at an Israel Council on Foreign Relations event. "It is an inefficient instrument. It is irrational and does not contribute to a solution [to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict], but causes damage."

Szijjártó's statement earned him praise from Netanyahu, but raised eyebrows among EU officials. The union's ambassador to Israel, Lars Faaborg-Anderson, approached his Hungarian colleague a few days later, informing him that labelling was not a matter of choice but binding legislation for all member states.

The Hungarian ambassador, Andor Nagy, remained unfazed.

"Our ministry is currently checking what we can do. Because if it's a mandatory issue we have to fight with the Commission," he told the *Times of Israel*. Labelling will not be the first issue Brussels and Budapest disagree about, he added, and if necessary, Hungary will take the matter to the courts.

Szijjártó studied economics in the United States and believes that Palestinian employees would be the first to be hurt if Israeli settler companies were to move their operations to Israel proper, Nagy added.

Either way, Hungary is not backing down, the ambassador asserted. "Because we think this is not the right tool to solve the Israel-Palestinian conflict." Hungary only imports some halvah products and dates from the West Bank, and therefore affixing special labels on them would be purely symbolic, he added. "And if we are speaking about symbolic issues, we think this is not the right measure."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a tour of the "Lev HaOlam" (Heart of the World) organization, in Jerusalem last February. The organization promotes the export and sale of products from Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria, and aims to fight BDS organizations of Israeli settlement products. HADAS PARUSH/FLASH90 PHOTO

European officials view these kind of comments mostly as grandstanding, assessing that Budapest will eventually come around and, like everybody else, implement the Commission's "Interpretative Notice on indication of origin of goods from the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967," which was published on Nov.11.

After all, they argue, the foreign ministers of all 28 member states in May 2012 decided to "fully and effectively implement existing EU legislation and the bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products." In other words, the note the Commission sent out a few weeks ago merely gives guidance on how and what to label, but in no way creates a new rule that Budapest or any other country can choose to disregard.

That goods manufactured outside Israel's internationally recognized boundaries should not be labelled as "Made in Israel" is a European consensus, the EU insists, and the need for labels is thus not optional.

"The European Commission expects all member states to comply with EU legislation," an official in the union's delegation to Israel said.

The note itself stated that the member states themselves are responsible for enforcing the proper labelling of settlement goods and need to "ensure that penalties for infringements of provisions of Union law are effective, proportionate and dissuasive." The Commission will ensure compliance with the member states' obligations "if need be by way of infringement proceedings."

The overwhelming majority of EU states have nothing to worry about, as they intend to fully implement the labelling guidelines. Britain, Belgium and Denmark have already implemented voluntary guidelines on labelling. And in April, the foreign ministers of 16 EU states urged the union's foreign policy czar, Federica Mogherini, to advance the publication of labelling guidelines, arguing that "this is an important step in the full implementation of EU longstanding policy, in relation to the preservation of the two-state solution."

Indeed, the *Times of Israel* inquired in several embassies of EU member states, all of which except Hungary and Germany – indicated they plan to implement the guidelines with no ifs, ands or buts.

"We are going to implement them because we don't have a choice. The understanding that each country has the freedom to make an independent decision is false," a senior diplomat from a European country said. EU states have been obligated to label settlement goods since 2012, but most waited for instructions from the Commission, the diplomat added. "Some countries did it right away. Others waited for guidance from the EU to do it in a harmonized way."

What about Germany? Jerusalem expects Berlin – considered Israel's best friend on the continent – to defy the guidelines or at least ignore them for as long as possible. During a cabinet meeting in late November, Netanyahu said the German government "came out against product labelling." He was likely referring to a press release by the Bundestag faction of Chancellor Angela Merkel's CDU party denouncing labelling, and to vague statements attributed by a German newspaper to the country's food and agriculture minister, Christian Schmidt.

However, there are no definitive statements from government officials that indicate that Berlin opposes labelling of settlement goods. Germany is, for obvious reasons, not enthusiastically embracing a demarche that many Israelis consider anti-Semitic. Several German officials contacted for this article were extremely careful in discussing the matter, pointing to its "political sensitivity" and arguing that they simply do not want Israel's enemies to "exploit" the matter. But at the end of the day, they indicated, Germany, too, will adhere to EU legislation and start labelling.

A lesser discussed aspect of the labelling controversy is the technical matter of the EU's plan. Who labels what, when, where and how?

It is up to the member states to guarantee the correct labelling of imported goods, but "the retailer will have to ensure the products have the right indication of origin," an official in the EU's Israel embassy explained. "In practice, it might be that the producer, the exporter or the importer labels the products before or after the exports take place."

Every country has different control mechanisms in place for noting imported goods' countries of origin. Israel, knowing that technically all states are required to adhere to the EU's labelling guidelines, hopes that friendlier countries will interpret grey areas and undefined aspects of the guidelines in Israel's favour. Indeed, some countries are expected to rush to ensure settlement goods are labelled as such, while others (like Hungary or Germany) might take their time before enforcing the commission's guidelines.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

Russian jet breached Israeli airspace, minister says

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
JERUSALEM

Israel's Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon confirmed last Sunday that a Russian jet had breached Israeli airspace recently, and that the matter was "immediately fixed through communications channels" that exist between the two countries.

In an interview with Israel Radio, on Nov. 29 Ya'alon was asked about claims by a senior defence official that Russian jets had penetrated Israeli airspace, and whether the IDF had a policy for responding to such overflights in light of the recent downing of a Russian jet by Turkish warplanes last week.

"I remind you that about a year ago we shot down a Syrian Sukhoi-24 plane that penetrated into our territory, and we also shot down an unmanned aerial vehicle," Ya'alon said. "When we understood that the Russians were planning to act inside Syria, we immediately met – also the prime minister – with [Russian President Vladimir] Putin, including the [Israeli] chief of staff and the assistant chief of staff...we created an open channel for co-ordination so as to prevent misunderstandings, because Russian planes are not trying to attack us and therefore it is not necessary to automatically – even if there is a mistake – to shoot them down."

Ya'alon said that there had been one breach in which a Russian plane had entered a few kilometres into Israeli territory, after which the Russians were "immediately contacted" and the plane "immediately returned to Syrian territory."

On Nov. 28, Amos Gilad, director of the political-security bureau in the Defence Ministry, said at a public event in Be'er Sheva that Russia has breached Israeli airspace more than once since it began intervening in Syria, but that the close security co-ordination between Jerusalem and Moscow had prevented any incidents like the one on the Turkish-Syrian border last week.

"Russian air force pilots at times cross into Israeli airspace. [But] thanks to the excellent security co-ordination [between Israel and Russia], which started right after the meeting between [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu and Putin [in September], and in which defined areas of operation were set, the Israel Defence Forces and the Russian military agreed on security arrangements," Gilad said.

Amos Gilad YOSSI ZAMIR/FLASH 90

Gilad also said that Syria has collapsed, a fact that Israel must internalize about its northern neighbour.

"Syria is a dead state, and Israel must understand this and prepare accordingly," Amos Gilad said. "[Syrian President Bashar] Assad's grip on the country is faltering, it is a land without rule," Gilad said, according to Army Radio.

With swathes of Syria falling into the hands of opposition forces, including jihadist groups, Assad has increasingly relied on support from allies Iran and the Lebanon-based terror group Hezbollah, both sworn enemies of Israel.

According to unconfirmed reports, Israel has attacked positions in Syria on a number of occasions, targeting primarily weapons shipments to Hezbollah in Lebanon. The IDF reportedly bombed Syrian regime and Hezbollah positions in the Qalamoun mountains late on Nov. 23.

Israel is reported to have been behind a series of air raids on Syrian territory since the Syrian civil war began in March 2011.

During his meeting with Putin in September, Netanyahu said that he told Putin in "no uncertain terms" that Israel would not tolerate Tehran's efforts to arm Israel's enemies in the region, and that Jerusalem has taken and will continue to take action against any such attempts.

"This is our right and also our duty," he said. "There were no objections to our rights and to what I said. On the contrary: there was readiness to make sure that whatever Russia's intentions for Syria, Russia will not be a partner in extreme actions by Iran against us." ■

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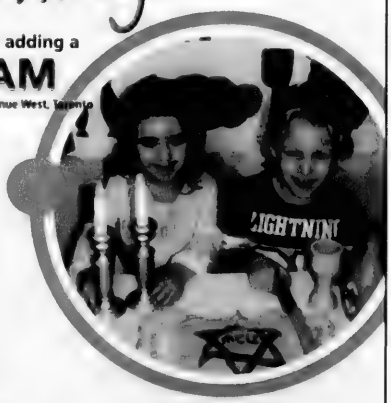

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Netanyahu meets with world leaders in Paris

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, right, met with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other world leaders at the climate change conference in Paris. AMOS BEN GERSHOM/GPO PHOTO

JTA
PARIS

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with several world leaders Nov. 30 at the United Nations climate change conference near Paris, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and U.S. President Barack Obama.

Netanyahu shook hands with Abbas after the group photo of the some 150 world leaders in attendance at the conference, which is being held at Le Bourget Airport just outside the French capital. Abbas and Netanyahu had been standing in the same row, with only one person between them.

It was the first time the leaders have come face to face since September 2010.

In a video of Netanyahu's meeting with Trudeau, which can be seen on YouTube, Netanyahu extols the "superb" relationship between Israel and Canada that can be made "even stronger," and invites his interlocutor to Jerusalem.

While Trudeau is noncommittal about such a visit ("when it works out," he says), he too praises the "very strong friendship and relationship between Canada and Israel."

He adds that he "looks forward" to continuing that friendship, perhaps seeking to assuage concerns in Jerusalem that his government will be less chummy toward Israel than that of his Conservative predecessor, Stephen Harper.

Netanyahu also met on the sidelines of the summit with Obama for about 10 minutes. They were joined at the end by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, according to reports.

He reportedly also spoke on the sidelines with French President François Hollande, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, British Prime Minister David Cameron and Britain's Prince Charles, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and, according to some reports, European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini.

Netanyahu was also scheduled to have official meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin, as well as the prime ministers of Poland, Japan, Australia, India and the Netherlands, according to the *Jerusalem Post*. ■

With files from Times of Israel

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ANALYSIS

Labels on West Bank goods are mandatory, says EU

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

"Israel is in contact with the EU member states in order to explain our opposition to the EU labelling directive. Our position is well understood," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Emmanuel Nahshon said, refusing to further elaborate.

While the "correct" labelling of settlement goods is mandatory for all member states, the way the labels are placed is not. They could thus be large, conspicuous notices placed prominently on the product, or discreet notes hidden somewhere between the ingredients and the nutritional information on the back.

According to the EU Commission, marking products from the settlements as "Made in Israel" would be "incorrect and misleading." But while the directive suggests the formulation "product from the West Bank (Israeli settlement)," that is merely a recommendation. Each member state needs to decide how it wants to phrase the label, as long as it makes clear that the goods are not from Israel and were not made by Palestinian-owned companies in the West Bank.

Theoretically, therefore, the formulation "Proudly produced by Jews in Judea and Samaria" – the West Bank's Biblical name – would be acceptable if a member state decides that that is what the label should say. An EU official confirmed to the *Times of Israel* that such a label "would be fine" in any country whose government chose that particular formula for the labels.

> *We think this is not the right tool to solve the Israel Palestinian conflict*
>
> **ANDOR NAGY**
> **Hungarian Ambassador**

This won't happen, of course. But it demonstrates to what extent the implementation of the Commission's guidelines is up to the discretion of each member state. Israeli diplomats across the continent are aware of that, and they are currently busy trying to persuade their interlocutors in the various capitals to make their labeling of settlement goods as painless as possible. ■

Jewish teens convicted for killing Palestinian

JTA
JERUSALEM

Two Jewish teens were found guilty of the murder of a Palestinian teen who was burned to death in the Jerusalem forest. The verdict in the kidnapping and killing of Mohammad Abu Khdeir, 16, was handed down Nov. 30 in Jerusalem District Court

The court also found that the third defendant, Yosef Haim Ben-David, 31, of the Adam settlement in the West Bank, carried out the crimes for which he was accused, but delayed issuing a verdict due to the last-minute submission of an insanity plea.

Attorneys for Ben-David submitted a psychiatric evaluation just days ago, that calls into question whether he was responsible for his actions at the time of his crime. Ben-David has a history of mental illness, and has been under medication for his condition, the original indictment said.

Khdeir was beaten unconscious and then burned to death in the Jerusalem Forest on July 2, 2014, to avenge the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teens the previous month, Ben-David told police at the time of his arrest.

The teens have not been identified because they were minors at the time of the crime. They will be sentenced next month. One of the teens was convicted of attempted aggravated kidnapping, aggravated assault, attempted arson, murder and abduction for the sake of murder. The other was convicted of murder and abduction for the sake of murder.

The teen's father, Hussein Abu Khdeir, called the decision to delay a verdict for Ben-David a "crime," and "utterly meaningless," according to reports. He accused the attorneys for Ben-David of "misleading the court." He has called for life sentences in prison for all three of those involved in the murder of his son. ■

OPINION

Right now Israeli nerves are stretched to their limit

Sagi Melamed

On a sunny winter morning, I went to Zichron Ya'akov for a business meeting. Visiting the Zichron Ya'akov pedestrian mall is like taking a little vacation. Cute stores with fun merchandise one doesn't need… houses from the 19th century… residents and tourists speaking foreign languages… good ice-cream…

I was early for my meeting at Tishbi restaurant, so I asked the waitress if I could leave my black briefcase by our table while I went out for a stroll until the meeting. I said there was no bomb and nothing of value inside, only papers. "We're not responsible for it, but as far as I'm concerned it's OK if you leave it," she responded.

After about 10 minutes of walking around the mall, I returned to the restaurant. Even from a distance I could see there was a problem. The server was waiting for me outside the restaurant, flustered and embarrassed. "You have to take your briefcase! People here are hysterical, they already called the police! Please, take it away quickly!"

I went over to the table and picked up my briefcase. Two older women were sitting at the next table. I felt as if they had been waiting for me to turn up so they could berate the person responsible for causing their distress. One scolded me loudly: "What on earth were you doing putting your case down here and then leaving? At a stressful time like this! It's totally irresponsible!"

I apologized for the unpleasantness and explained that the server had given me permission to leave the briefcase next to the table. "In that case it's her fault!" declared one of the women, while other diners nodded in agreement. "Why did you leave a briefcase here and terrify everyone?" the hysterical woman kept asking.

I tried another tack. "Do I look dangerous to you?" I asked.

"What's that got to do with anything?" she answered. "Terrorists don't look dangerous either."

I took my briefcase and went out to continue my stroll. Five minutes later, I returned, this time accompanied by the two women with whom I was scheduled to meet. I had already warned them the other diners were liable to give me strange glances.

When the hysterical woman spotted me, she renewed her attack: "You again! Back and forth, back and forth… Maybe you're from the income tax authority!"

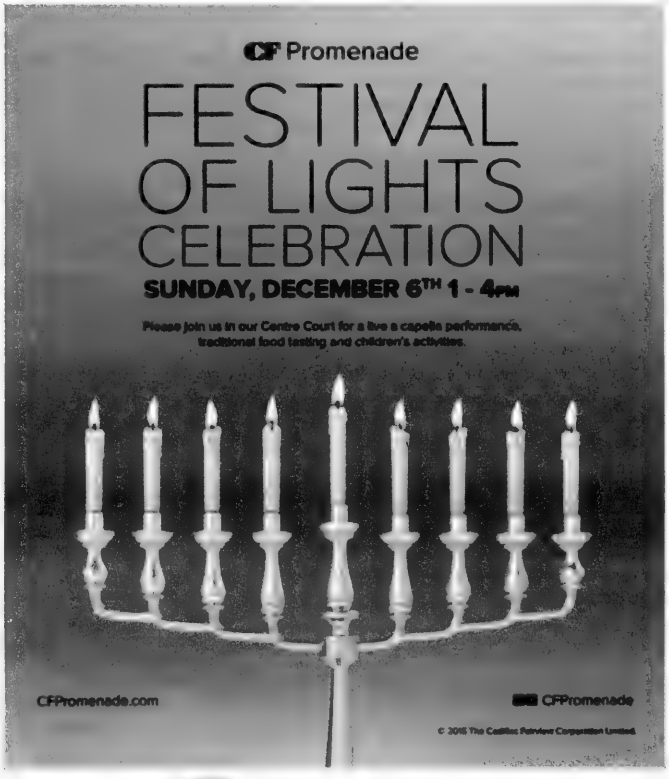
This was too much. "It's bad enough you thought I was a terrorist. Now you're accusing me of being a taxman?"

Right now Israeli nerves are stretched to their limit. One cannot blame that hysterical, impolite woman. When from every alley and corner Palestinians are popping up, some mere teenagers, brandishing knives to fulfil the dream of killing a Jew, one can only be rendered speechless at the intensity of the hatred and animosity behind those knives. It is equally impossible not to wonder whether we can ever live here together – and if not together, then how?

And yet, Israel has known worse times. Thugs will not break us, not with knives and not with bombs. Strain our nerves? Yes. Postpone the dream of peace for generations? Yes. But break our spirit? Never.

We must remember that ultimately, the key is not what our enemies do, but what we do. Whether the attacks and hatred will divide or unite us. To quote my friend Ram Shmueli, who, following a career as an air force pilot and senior commander, now devotes his time and charisma to building unity in Israel and strengthening the ties between its different components: "We must create a new 'national hope' in the social realm as a vital complement to national security."

So to the woman who was angry with me and yelled at me because of the briefcase: On edge – understood. Stressed to the limit – naturally. But let's avoid hysteria and try not to take out our anxieties and stresses on each other. ■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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 3, 2015

Some Jewish refugees to the U.S. really were Nazis

A look at the similarities between Syrian and wartime Jewish refugees

RON KAMPEAS
JTA WASHINGTON

Much has been written about whether Syrian refugees today bear similarities to the Jews who sought refuge from Nazi Europe.

Most Jewish organizations believe there are parallels. Then, as now, the mass exit was chaotic and precipitated a crisis in Europe. Then as now, opponents argued that the refugees would provide cover for infiltrators from among the group they were fleeing. Then, as now, the world looked to the United States for leadership. Then, as now, American popular opinion opposed allowing in the refugees.

Here are some other facts about Jewish refugees and the United States from the period that may be relevant today:

Heeding calls from Jewish organizations, president Franklin Roosevelt in March of 1938 called for an international conference to absorb Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria. As the spring wore on, however, according to Walter Laquer's *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, the Americans surprised other potential absorbers of refugees by not really organizing anything.

"By late spring 1938, the United States had abdicated all responsibility for the conference preparations and looked to representatives of various regions, notably Latin America, to sponsor rescue proposals on their own territory," Judith Tydor Baumel writes in the article.

A number of the several dozen nations slated to attend – particularly those in Latin America, which were susceptible to American influence – braced for pressure to take in Jewish refugees.

Any hopes the United States would provide leadership were dashed in July, when the conference finally convened in Evian on the French-Swiss border. Myron Taylor, a steel magnate with no foreign policy experience who was named conference chairman announced the United States was ready to take in 27,370 immigrants – its pre-existing quota.

Other nations attending, relieved that the United States was essentially ready to do nothing more than it was already doing, followed suit. (Nonetheless, according to the same encyclopedia, the United States took in 43,000 Jewish refugees in 1939. By comparison Canada took in less than 5,000 Jews during Hitler's 12-year rule.)

Neither Marlene Dietrich, the German movie star, nor Bela Bartok, the Hungarian composer, was Jewish.

But both the "Blue Angel" and the 20th century melder of folk and "serious" music stood up for the Jews in their countries, making them unwelcome at home.

Dietrich, like many other Europeans who had found success in film in their own countries, had already moved to Hollywood before the rise of the Nazis, but in 1937, she enraged the Nazis by becoming a U.S. citizen.

She showed sensitivity to Jewish sensibilities well past the war; in Israel on a visit in 1960, she asked her audience's permission before singing in German, according to the Central Zionist Archives.

"Bartok firmly opposed the rise of Nazism, its persecution of the Jews and the banning of their work. He was not a Jew, but said he was ready to become one just to protest against the persecution which was extending itself to Austria and Hungary," according to a listing of famous refugees on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees website.

He didn't convert, but he did leave for the United States in 1940, dying there in 1945. His remains were re-interred in his beloved Hungary in 1988.

The director of the best ever movie about refugees knew from refugees.

Like Dietrich, Michael Curtiz – born in Hungary as Kertész Kaminer Mano – moved to Hollywood by choice, before the rise of the Nazis.

His sister was not so fortunate, and she and her family were sent to Auschwitz, where her husband died, according to a nostalgia entertainment website. Curtiz paid part of his earnings into the European Film Fund, a charity that helped refugees from Europe establish themselves in the U.S. film industry.

His best-known film is an aching testament to love surviving the separations wrought by war: 1942's *Casablanca*.

Opponents who warned of Communists and Nazis among the Jewish refugees were not entirely wrong.

The Intercept reported recently on the propaganda by opponents of Jewish immigration during the Nazi era – many of them outright anti-Semites who cited fears of Communist and Nazi infiltrators.

These fears were grossly overblown, but not unfounded.

Samuel Dickstein, a Jewish congressman from New York, bears the distinction of being the only congressman known to also have been a spy. Dickstein, who made his name seeking Nazis in the United States in the 1930s, helped establish the House Un-American Activities Committee in that decade. (The committee was set up to track Nazi infiltrators, but two decades later it became notorious for seeing Communists everywhere.)

According to documents unearthed in the post-Soviet era by historians Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev and revealed in their 1999 book, *The Haunted Wood*, Dickstein was also accepting cash from the Soviets for sharing information and – on at least one occasion – for attempting to obtain U.S. citizenship for an Austrian spy for the Soviets.

His handlers didn't like him much, as *Politico* reported last year: "Moscow concluded that Dickstein was 'heading a criminal gang that was involved in shady businesses, selling passports, illegal smuggling of people, getting citizenship.'"

At least one Nazi also attempted to infiltrate the United States as a Jew. In 1942, astute FBI agents correctly identified Herbert Karl Friedrich Bahr as a Nazi seeking refuge in the United States, claiming to be a Jew, according to an account earlier this month by *Smithsonian*.

Not every argument against the Jewish refugees was necessarily bigoted. Then, as now, there were opponents who said allowing refugees in was an affront to applicants for permanent entry into the United States who had gone through the legal process and waited patiently for years.

In May of 1939, the St. Louis floated off the coast of Florida, so close passengers "could see the lights of Miami," according to the St. Louis entry in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's online encyclopedia.

The passengers, desperate, pleaded with Roosevelt through cables. A State Department telegram sent to a passenger stated that the passengers must "await their turns on the waiting list and qualify for and obtain immigration visas before they may be admissible into the United States."

The St. Louis was forced to return to Europe, although Britain took in 288 passengers. Of the 620 who returned to the continent – some to countries that had yet to be occupied by the Nazis – 258 were murdered by the Nazis. ■

The St. Louis was turned away from the United States and Canada.

MK resigns over sexual assault allegations

JTA
JERUSALEM

An Israeli lawmaker from the Jewish Home Party will resign from the Knesset over sexual assault allegations.

Yinon Magal informed party leader Naftali Bennett on Monday that he will resign following the accusations by two women who worked with him when he was editor of the Hebrew language news website *Walla*, as well as others.

At least four women in recent weeks have accused Magal, who is married, of making lewd comments and sexual assault in the past.

Magal had resigned last week from his position as Jewish Home's Knesset faction chairman in light of the allegations. He apologized for his actions.

"I made a mistake in my past conduct, which is even more unbecoming for the public official I am today," Magal said in a statement last week. "I apologize from the bottom of my heart to those who were hurt. I am determined to correct my behaviour and also to repair things on the personal and family level."

On Monday, Magal reportedly said in a statement announcing his decision to resign that, while his actions were not criminal, people were hurt by them, leading to his decision.

Bennett, who is currently in the United States, called Magal's decision "proper." ■

CHANUKAH FOOD & GIFTS

Adorn your table with Star of David desserts

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Star of David, also known as the Magen David, or Shield of David, is an easily recognized six-pointed star that, according to legend, hero King David carried as an image on his shield.

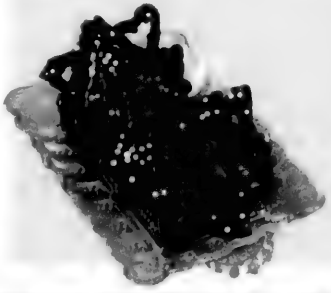
The origins of the shape are likely not strictly related to the Jewish faith, and ancient Jewish artifacts are highly unlikely to contain this symbol. Around the 17th century the Magen David started to appear on the outside of synagogues, to identify them as Jewish places of worship. It is not known why this symbol was chosen.

Jewish scholars have attributed deep theological significance to the symbol. For example, it has been pointed out that the top triangle points upwards, toward God, while the lower triangle points downwards, toward Earth and the people there. Some scholars note that the intertwining of the triangles makes them inseparable, like the Jewish people. Others say that the three sides of each triangle represents the three types of Jews: Kohanim, Levites and Israelites. It was also thought that the star brought good luck.

The nine-branched menorah that we now use on Chanukah is commonly adorned with the Star of David. So why not use the Star Of David to accent our tables and ultimately our food? Brightly embellished Chanukah tableware and paper goods can easily be found at party and dollar stores. With these unusual recipes, you can learn to fill your dessert table with delicious "Star of David" Holiday desserts. Happy Chanukah!

Magen David Pretzels

- 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 8 oz. pretzel sticks
- blue and white candy sprinkles or pearl nonpareils



Melt the chocolate chips in a large microwave safe bowl in the microwave for one minute. Stir until smooth. Dip the pretzels into the warm chocolate. Use the chocolate as "glue" placing ends together into triangles, place on parchment paper. Cool in refrigerator. Microwave the chocolate for 20 seconds to re-melt. Place one pretzel triangle over another triangle in the opposite direction, using chocolate as glue. This will make a Star of David.

Drizzle on a bit more chocolate and sprinkle with blue and white or pearl sprinkles.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Serve your guests Chanukah pie with a twist

Magen David Pie

Filling

- ❑ 1 cup sugar
- ❑ 3 tbsp. corn starch
- ❑ 3/4 cup water
- ❑ 4 cups frozen blueberries
- ❑ 1 1/2 tbsp. lemon juice
- ❑ zest of one lemon

Combine sugar, cornstarch and water in a heavy bottomed saucepan. Heat rapidly until thickened. Remove from heat and add 2 cups of the blueberries. Return to heat until filling becomes an even purple/blue colour. Remove from heat and add remaining blueberries, lemon juice and lemon zest. Cool.

Pie shell

- ❑ 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- ❑ 1 tbsp. sugar
- ❑ 3/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1 cup chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-in. cubes
- ❑ 6 tbsp. (approximately) ice water
- ❑ blueberry filling
- ❑ 1 egg to glaze pastry

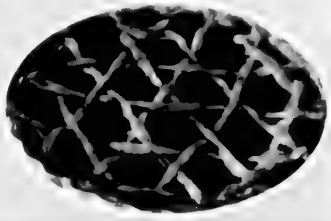
Mix flour, sugar, and salt in processor. Add butter; pulse until coarse meal forms. Gradually blend in enough ice water to form moist clumps. Gather dough into ball; divide in half. Form dough into 2 balls; flatten into disks. Wrap each in plastic; chill 2 hours or overnight.

On a lightly floured surface, roll each disk into a 14-in. circle, 1/8 in. thick. Place 1 circle on a parchment-lined baking sheet, and cool until firm, about 30 minutes. Fit the other circle into an 11-in. fluted round pie pan. Trim dough flush with top edge of pan. Refrigerate until ready to use.

To make the Star of David lattice: Remove baking sheet from refrigerator. Using a clean ruler as a guide, cut dough circle into 16 1/4-in.-wide strips with a sharp knife. Lay 6 strips of dough on another parchment-lined baking sheet in parallel lines. With 6 more strips, one at a time, weave them at a 90-degree angle to the first strips. Starting in the centre, weave 1 new strip diagonally under and over the top layer. Continue with each additional strip, 1 in. apart, reversing to over and under with every other strip. Repeat procedure with the remaining 6 strips, but in the opposite diagonal direction. If dough strips become too soft, return to refrigerator until firm. Adjust strips with your fingers, if necessary, to create star lattice pattern. Freeze on baking sheet until ready to use.

Spread cooled fruit mixture evenly on dough in pie pan. Carefully slide frozen lattice on top of filled pie shell, centering it on filling. Trim edges and press edges to seal. Brush top of lattice with beaten egg.

Preheat oven to 400. Bake tart for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 375 and continue baking for 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown and filling is bubbling. Cool in pan on a wire rack. ■



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Books serve as enlightening gifts for Festival of Lights

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

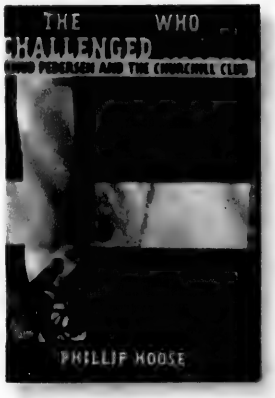
Families and friends will gather on Dec. 6 to light the first Chanukah candle. Dinner guests invariably bring gifts for the children, and books serve as fine keepsakes.

Here is a sampling of recent publications to accommodate readers in primary grades and middle school or junior high school readers. Distributed by Raincoast Books in Canada, the titles are timely and enlightening.

When Germany occupied Denmark in 1940, the king, political dignitaries and countrymen initially surrendered. However, a group of teenagers sought revenge. Knud and Jen Pedersen, sons of a respected clergyman, were the prime movers behind the RAF and Churchill Clubs in Odense and Aalborg, Denmark. The clubs were named after Winston Churchill and the British RAF that the boys admired for standing up to Hitler. The youth were ashamed of their nation, lamenting Denmark should have emulated Norway and fought back. Their other neighbouring nation, Sweden adopted a neutral stance.

Despite lack of resources and training, the boys created havoc for German troops by repainting Nazi signs and insignia and destroying property. They were caught and imprisoned for over two years, but their heroics inspired other Danes to rise against oppression. Ultimately, tiny Denmark helped save more than 700,000 Jews from being delivered to German death camps.

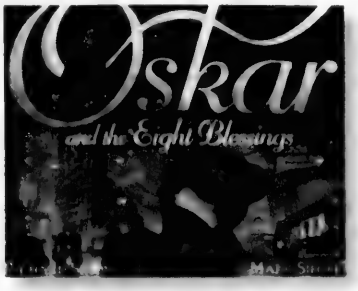
The Boys Who Challenged Hitler by Phillip Hoose, distributed in Canada by Raincoast Books, is geared for young adults, but mature readers of all ages will find this hardcover nonfiction book enlightening. Although Denmark's deeds are common knowledge, Hoose reveals facts and treats readers to impressive first-hand reports by Knud Pedersen. Hoose, an award-winning American author was alerted to the Danish teenagers' heroics in 2000 when he visited a museum in Denmark.



> *Their heroics inspired other Danes to rise against oppression.*

Upon his return to the United States, Hoose contacted Pedersen about writing the story, but was refused because of an earlier offer. Hoose's second attempt in 2012 was accepted. Pedersen implied the initial plans fell through and he was eager to get started. He offered to host Phillip and his wife, Sandi, at his cottage in Denmark and encouraged them to visit soon.

In addition to conducting numerous face-to-face interviews with Pedersen and other principals involved, Hoose collected maps, drawings, photographs, copies of documents and pertinent background material. The layout of the book is innovative and newsworthy. First-hand reports, narratives, boxed information and illustrations bring the story to life. After the visit, Hoose kept in contact with Pedersen until the 88-year-old war resistance hero died in December 2014. Hoose briefs readers on the fate of all the principals involved in the story. In addition to his contribution to the war effort, Pedersen, an accomplished artist, felt everyone should be privy to prized artwork. Hence, he founded the world's first art library in Copenhagen.



Oskar and the Eight Blessings by Richard Simon and Tanya Simon is distributed by Raincoast Books in Canada, and is perfectly timed for Chanukah. Oskar, a young refugee from Europe, arrives alone in New York City on the seventh night of Chanukah in 1938.

The bewildered lad's only clue to his future digs is a photo and address of an aunt he has never met. Oskar's astute parents sent him off after enduring Kristallnacht. His father's parting message drives home the underlying theme of the story. "Oskar, even in bad times, people can be good. You have to look for the blessings."

Readers, ages four to eight, as well as older peers, parents and educators, will be mesmerized by illustrator Mark Siegel's magnificent paintings. He conveys Oskar's trepidation, fascination and gratitude while finding his way in the immense city lined with high buildings and strangers. The New York co-authors have independent writing careers but Tanya Simon worked in tandem with her husband, Richard, to bring his topic to fruition. To discover his motive, check out the "Author's Note" at the end of the book.

Young readers of this book are subliminally introduced to meaningful information. Furthermore, the dates, styles, celebrated personalities and events are accurate. The authors embrace the Festival of Lights and note the seventh night of Chanukah in 1938 coincided with Christmas Eve. The authors allude to the spiritual significance of the holidays and show how Oskar received acts of kindness from strangers of every persuasion. ■

Photos courtesy of Raincoast Books in Canada

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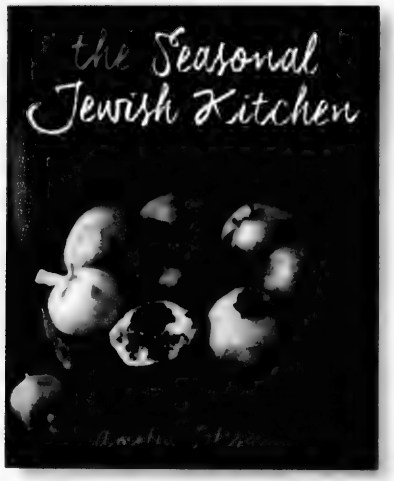


SYBIL KAPLAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Amelia Saltsman's background makes for an interesting source for her new cookbook, *The Seasonal Jewish Kitchen*. Her mother is Romanian, and her father is Iraqi. They met in the Israeli army and immigrated to Los Angeles where Amelia was born and grew up.

She is a regular contributor on food in the media. She and her family live in Santa Monica, Calif.

One day while cooking and sharing her ideas on the social media and her blog, the responses were so overwhelming, she realized "that a new generation of cooks was looking for a fresh approach to Jewish food." Thinking about her own family heritage then led her to explore her family's culinary roots more deeply.

The result is 146 recipes plus 135 colour photographs. Each two-month section contains information about the holidays of that period. Recipes go from starters, salads and soups to side dishes, main courses and desserts.

Saltsman says the recipes are labelled as meat, dairy, pareve and fish, as well as vegan or gluten free. "The food philosophy is that you should use well-raised, whole, real foods. There are no artificial ingredients used in any recipes."

Recipes are included from Tunisia, Morocco, Germany, Syria, Yemen, Persia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Eastern Europe and, of course, Romania and Israel.

For Chanukah, here are two of her recipes.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

A fresh approach to traditional cooking

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Best potato latkes

- ❑ 2 lb. peeled starchy potatoes
- ❑ 1 small onion
- ❑ 2 heaping tbsp. unbleached all purpose flour or potato starch
- ❑ 1 tsp. kosher salt
- ❑ ½ tsp. baking powder
- ❑ freshly ground black pepper
- ❑ 2 lightly beaten eggs
- ❑ mild oil (grapeseed, sunflower or avocado)
- ❑ sea salt

Using the large holes of a box grater or a food processor fitted with the grating disk, grate the potatoes (about 5 cups).

Grate the onion on the large holes of the box grater or fit the processor with the metal S blade and grate.

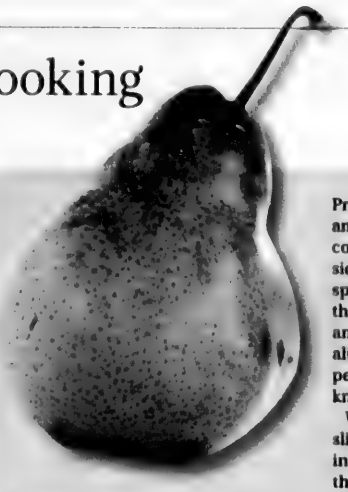
In a large bowl, stir together potatoes, onion, flour salt, baking powder and a few grinds of pepper. Stir in eggs.

Line 2 or 3 sheet pans with paper towels. Place the prepared pans, the latke batter, a large spoon and a spatula near the stove.

Heat 1 or 2 large skillets over medium heat. Pour into skillets not more than ¼-in. oil. When the oil is shimmering and a tiny bit of batter sizzles on contact, start spooning in the latke batter, making sure to add both solids and liquids. Using the back of the spoon, flatten each spoonful into a circle 3 to 4 in. in diameter. Do not crowd the latkes in the pan. You will get 4 or 5 latkes in a 12-in. skillet.

Cook the latkes, flipping them once until golden on both sides, 5 to 6 minutes total.

Transfer the latkes to the prepared baking sheet. Cook the remaining batter in the same way, stirring the batter before adding more to the pan and adding oil as needed at the edge of the pan. Arrange the latkes on a warmed platter, sprinkle with sea salt, and serve with applesauce or sour cream. Yield: 24 latkes



Roasted smashed apples and pears

- ❑ 3 lb. medium-size apples and pears
- ❑ a few sprigs thyme (optional)
- ❑ 2 to 3 tbsp. water, fresh lemon juice, Calvados, pear brandy or eau-de-vie, hard cider or dessert wine
- ❑ ground cinnamon or nutmeg (optional)

Preheat the oven to 375. Halve the pears and apples through the stem end, then core them, and place the halves, cut side down, on one or more sheet pans, spacing them 1 to 2 in. apart. If using the thyme, scatter it among the pears and apples. Cover the pan tightly with aluminum foil. Bake the apples and pears until tender when pierced with a knife tip (30 to 40 minutes).

When they are cool enough to handle, slip the fruits from the skins and back into the pan, scraping any pulp from the skins. Discard skins and thyme stems.

Mash the apples and pears with a fork, stirring in enough water or other liquid to help scrape up any brown bits from the pan bottom and lighten the texture of the fruit.

Scrape the mixture into a bowl and serve warm at room temperature or cover and refrigerate up to a day ahead and serve cold. This can also be made with all pears or all apples. Yield: 3 cups. ■

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Cookies are easy to make and always a hit

EILEEN GOLTZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Chanukah and cookies are two words that seem to go together (along with latkes and sufganiyot, of course).

I try, every year, to come up with a few new and exciting cookies recipes that can be made ahead of time, can be doubled or tripled and are so delicious that everyone will be begging for recipes.

Vanilla rolled sugar cookies

The best frosting is a glaze made with powdered sugar and milk or non-dairy substitute of your choice. Keep it thin and you can colour it with food coloring.

- ❑ 1 1/2 cups butter or margarine softened
- ❑ 2 cups sugar
- ❑ 4 eggs
- ❑ 2 tsp. vanilla
- ❑ 5 cups flour
- ❑ 2 tsp. baking powder
- ❑ 1 tsp. salt

In the bowl of an electric mixer combine the butter and sugar and beat until smooth (at least 3 minutes). Add the eggs and vanilla and beat until combined. Slowly, on a low speed, add the flour, baking powder, and salt. When combined, cover, and refrigerate the dough for at least two hours or overnight.

When you're ready to cut out your cookies, preheat oven to 400. Lightly flour the surface you're going to be rolling the dough on and then roll out 1/3 of the dough to about 1/4- to 1/2-in. thick. Cut the dough into shapes with your cookie cutter. Place cookies 1 in. apart on parchment paper covered cookie sheets. You can decorate with coloured sugar or sprinkles at this point or wait until they are baked and cooled to frost. Repeat with the scraps and the remaining dough, 1/3 at a time. Bake 6 to 9 minutes (they should be just lightly golden on the edges) Makes 3 to 5 dozen depending on the size of the cookies.

Nut squares

Crust:

- ❑ 1/2 cup sugar
- ❑ 1/2 cup plus 6 tbsp. butter or margarine, softened
- ❑ 1 egg
- ❑ 3 cups flour
- ❑ 1 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. baking powder

Filling:

- ❑ 1 1/4 cups butter or margarine, softened
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups packed brown sugar
- ❑ 1/4 cup plus 1 tbsp. granulated sugar
- ❑ 1/3 cup honey
- ❑ 1/3 cup light corn syrup
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups toasted pecans pieces
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups toasted walnuts pieces
- ❑ 1/2 cup toasted hazelnut pieces
- ❑ 1/4 cup whipping cream or non dairy substitute
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. vanilla

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a 10-by-15 in. baking pan. Line the pan with parchment paper. An overhang on the ends help to remove the cookie from the pan after it is baked and cooled so that cutting is easier).

In the bowl of an electric mixer cream together the sugar and butter for at least 3 minutes. Add the egg and beat until combined.

In another bowl, combine the flour, salt and baking powder. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture and mix just until dough comes together (do not over mix). Press the dough into the prepared pan, making sure that the dough goes up the edges slightly. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes or until the crust is just slightly browned (do not overcook). Remove the crust and cool. Reduce the temperature to 300.

While the crust is cooling combine the butter, brown sugar, sugar, honey and corn syrup. Bring the mixture to a boil. Boil for between 2 to 3 minutes but no less and no longer than that. Remove the mixture from the heat and stir in the nuts, cream, salt and vanilla. Mix to combine and then gently spoon the nut mixture into the crust. Return the pan to the oven and cook for 35 to 40 minutes, or until the filling is bubbling. Don't worry if it looks a little runny, it will set up as it cools. Let it set up for at least 4 hours (or overnight) before you try to cut it. Cut into small squares or rectangles. Makes up to 48 cookies depending on the size. ■

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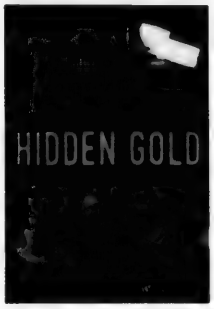

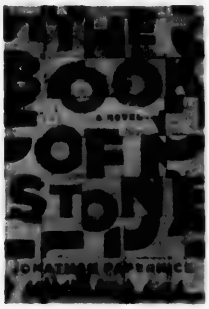

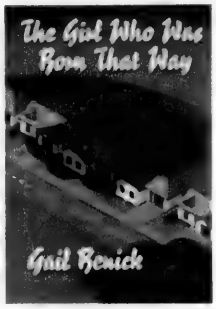

CJN STAFF

The CJN gets many books sent to our office for review. Unfortunately we are unable to fully review each one. Below are some recent publications that our editors determined would make perfect gifts for the reader in your home.

Holocaust related:

A bestseller in France, ***But You Did Not Come Back***, a memoir by Marceline Loridan-Ivens (Penguin Random House), is an astonishing addition to the library of literature on the Holocaust.

Loridan-Ivens was 15 when she and her father were sent to concentration camps. Written as a letter to her father, whom she would only see once after their arrest, this deeply moving account has earned comparisons to Elie Wiesel's *Night*.

It was little more than 75 years ago that human history witnessed an unprecedented crime – the deliberate mass murder of millions in the aim of removing a whole people from the earth. Acclaimed historian Timothy Snyder has spent years in the painstaking effort to recover the experience of the victims, the intentions of the killers and the history of the Europe they shared. ***Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning*** (Tim Duggan Books) is a remarkable work of scholarship that offers a new and innovative interpretation of the Holocaust and a frightening warning about our future.

Inspired by her mother's experience during World War II, Ella Burakowski captures a chilling chapter of family – and human – history in her debut novel ***Hidden Gold: A True Story of the Holocaust*** (Second Story Press). After the Nazis invade Poland, the Gold children and their mother must set out on a path of near-constant flight and hiding to survive. *Hidden Gold* follows the family as they struggle to find a safe haven, unsure of whom they can trust.

Fiction:

From Alice Hoffman, bestselling author of *The Dovekeepers* and *The Museum of Extraordinary Things*, ***The Marriage of Opposites*** (Simon & Schuster) centres on Rachel Pissarro, a formidable and passionate woman who defied her tight-knit community on St. Thomas and pursued a forbidden love affair that made her an outcast and gave birth to painter Camille Pissarro – the father of impressionism.

The Book of Stone by Jonathan Papernick (Fig Tree Books) is an arresting psychological thriller set in pre-9/11 Brooklyn. As an estranged son attempts to find meaning and purpose in his life, his family's dark history is peeled back, layer by layer, against the backdrop of religious extremism.

The Girl Who Was Born That Way by Sheridan College professor Gail Benick (Inannna Publications) is the story of the Berk family trying to bury its Holocaust past while starting over in postwar United States. It centres on the dynamics between the family's four daughters, the two oldest of whom who grew up in the Lodz Ghetto, the two youngest in an idyllic American suburb.

Memoir:

Born to Holocaust survivors and brought up in Melbourne, Australian journalist Ramona Koval was kept in the dark about her parents' lives before Australia. From a young age, she felt that the man she called Father was not her biological parent, but she had only her feelings to go on. A quest for identity, recounted with sensitivity and humour, ***Bloodhound: Searching for my Father*** (The Text Publishing Co.), takes hold of the reader and never lets go.

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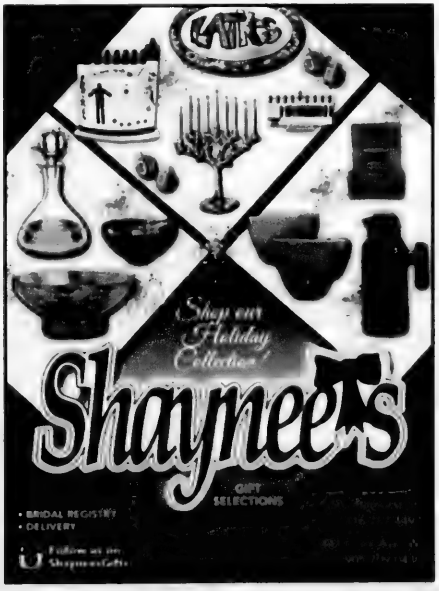

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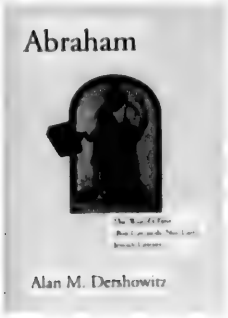

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In ***The Pater, My Father, My Judaism, My Childlessness*** (Toby), writer and journalist Elliot Jager tackles what has until now been an almost taboo subject: what it feels like to be a childless Jewish man. After a 30-year estrangement from his chassidic father, a halting reconciliation is overshadowed by the elderly man's desire that Jager father a male child.

Non-fiction:

In ***Abraham*** (Random House Canada), Alan M. Dershowitz gives us a no-holds-barred history of Jewish lawyers: from the biblical Abraham through modern-day advocates who have changed the world by challenging the status quo, defending the unpopular, contributing to the rule of law and following the biblical command to pursue justice.

In ***The Grammar of God, A Journey Into the Words and Worlds of the Bible*** (Spiegel & Grau), Aviya Kushner tells the story of her vibrant relationship to the Bible, and along the way, illustrates how the differences in translation (from Hebrew to English) affect our understanding of our culture's most important work. The book is also a moving tale about leaving home and returning to it, literally and through reading.

Knopf Canada has just published ***Gratitude,*** a deeply moving testimony featuring four poignant essays by the late Oliver Sacks, previously published in the *New York Times.*

Young Readers:

Canadian Jewish Book Award-winner Anne Dublin wrote ***Stealing Time, A Jonah Wiley Adventure*** (Dundurn), in which the protagonist and his stepbrother Toby are hurled back in time to Egypt, China, France and other places. In order to get back to the present, they must overcome their personal issues and work together to solve the tough problems they encounter.

Also by Anne Dublin, ***44 Hours or Strike!*** (Second Story Press) brings to life a crucial part of labour history – the 1931 Toronto Dressmakers' Strike – in a fast-paced story for young readers.

Stones on a Grave by Kathy Kacer (Orca Book Publishers) is part of Secrets, a series of seven linked young adult novels by seven novelists that can be read in any order. The series takes place in 1964. Life is about to change for seven teen girls when the orphanage they call home burns to the ground. On their own for the first time, each girl embarks on a journey of discovery, following clues to the families they never had and experiencing the world in ways they never imagined.

In ***Numbers*** by David A. Poulsen (Dundurn), Andy Crockett doesn't fit in at his new school – not with the goths, not with the jocks, and certainly not with the brains. Not even, really, with The Six, a group of misfits who hang out with each other mostly because they can't stand hanging out with anyone else.

As a young girl, Tuky Gestener lived a carefree, privileged life in Budapest. But when Hungary joined the German side in World War II, everything changed. Based on true events, ***Tuky, the Story of a Hidden Child*** by Shterni Rosenfeld (Hachai) tells the story of Tuky and her brother and cousin who went to hide with non-Jewish farmers in the country.

Poetry:

In his first poetry collection, Daniel Goodwin negotiates between love and war, the personal and the public, high culture and pop culture, the ancient and modern worlds. Three currents run through ***Catullus's Soldiers*** (Cormorant Books): the poet's love for his family, his ambivalent reactions to the wider world of politics and his private relationship with the muse as he wrestles with the limitations and triumphs of art. ■

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Experts preach safety first when selecting children's toys

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

Children today have access to an amazing array of sophisticated digital devices, games and toys.

The Better Business Bureau, Health Canada and other consumer protection agencies monitor these products for reliability and safety.

To avoid injury, consumers are advised to monitor safety alerts and product recalls. The agencies offer the following guidelines pertaining to gift selection and playtime supervision.

When buying toys, always pick age-appropriate products and even though some companies include this information with the packaging, it's best to check. For example, products with small, detachable parts are dangerous in the hands of babies and toddlers. Plush toys should be kept away from heat sources, such as stoves, fireplaces or space heaters. Discard damaged toys with loose parts and sharp edges.

Problems arise when parts become loose in squeeze toys, squeakers, and rattles. Even though babies and toddlers are apt to refuse a spoonful of delicious food, they never fail to pop other things into their mouths.

Button batteries and magnets can be lethal if ingested, therefore, product compliance and parental supervision are vital. Look for products with battery compartments that prevent easy access. For example, screw-closed compartments are often harder to open than the slide-open models. Among the many items that contain button batteries and magnets are musical greeting cards, board books and flashing jewelry. Adult supervision is necessary when young children are exposed to these items.

Health Canada points out the importance of adults as well as children adhering to battery instructions. Considering numerous games and devices require batteries, elders should beware of how to install, replace and store batteries. If one battery in the set wears out, replace all of them. Don't mix old and new batteries. Children should not be allowed to take battery-run toys to bed. Battery burns and leakage are hazards to avoid. Don't try to recharge batteries that are not rechargeable. Store batteries in a dry place out of a child's reach. If many months elapse between the times the toy is in use, remove and store the batteries in the interim.

Avoid toys with ribbons or cords long enough to wrap around a child's neck. Ride-on toys should be age appropriate and accommodate the child's weight. Furthermore, playtime must take place away from stairs, swimming pools, furniture and traffic.

Monitor volume control, when children spend hours with shrill loud sounding toys. Besides creating an unpleasant atmosphere for everyone around, the noise may affect the child's hearing. Discard broken balloon pieces to prevent little ones from swallowing latex and blocking their airways. Children love face paint and it adds a touch of flair to party time but in some instances it's best to play safe. As Health Canada points out, hypoallergenic indicates the product is "less likely" to cause allergic reactions rather than meaning 100 per cent safe. ■

To check for consumer recalls, visit www.healthcanadians.gc.ca

For the latest Chanukah food trends visit **www.cjnews.com/food**

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Jewish Life

Director gives Jacob Two-Two a makeover

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang was one of the first plays Jen Shuber ever saw. Now, she's co-directing a new production of it for the Young People's Theatre's (YPT) 50th anniversary season.

It's a very special feeling because my parents took me to see everything at YPT," she says. "But that was the first thing I ever saw, and I remember it so clearly."

Mordecai Richler's now classic children's book is celebrating its 40th birthday this year. Richler also wrote the play, which premiered more than 30 years ago at YPT – that's the production Shuber saw back in 1984. While YPT has since mounted it numerous times, it's getting a makeover for 2015.

Shuber and her co-director Allen MacInnis, who's also YPT's artistic director, worked closely with sisters Anika and Britta Johnson for eight months as they created new music for the show.

"We decided that if we were going to bring it back, we needed to find a way to make it resonate with modern audiences," Shuber says.

The Johnsons penned a score that's filled with pop and hip-hop influences. The now-iconic *Jacob Two-Two* story, however, remains intact. And Shuber knows it's still resonating with kids.

After the first few performances, children were humming the music and talking about the play as they left the theatre. "That's really the litmus test of doing my job," she says.

With a cast of 12, YPT brought on two kids – Drew Davis and David G. Black – to share the title role in alternating performances. This is a rarity for YPT because despite producing children's theatre, it usually features only adult actors.

"We really felt that for this particular piece, it would be important to have a child playing the lead role," says Shuber.

Along with co-directing, Shuber's the choreographer. She was also the choreographer for YPT's *James and the Giant Peach* last year and earned a Dora nomination for her work.

Shuber graduated from New York University's Tisch School with a BFA in acting and also attended the National Ballet School of Canada. She's now both a director and a choreographer in Toronto and she's recently worked with companies including Harold Green Jewish Theatre and Theatre Passe Muraille. She's also the program director of the Composium workshop for Theatre 20, which is dedicated to developing new Canadian musical theatre.

> *We really felt that for this particular piece, it would be important to have a child playing the lead role.*
>
> **JEN SHUBER, co-director**

As for *Jacob Two-Two*, Shuber stresses that it's enjoyable for both children and adults. "I think one of the amazing things about YPT is they put together productions and they assume that kids are smart and inquisitive, and it's a very high level of entertainment," she says.

As in all YPT shows, children can interact with the actors in a question-and-answer period following each and every performance.

This production is suitable for ages five and up. And, despite its ominous sounding name, it's not scary at all. Rather, it explores subjects relevant to youngsters as well as those who are young at heart.

"It deals with all kinds of themes, like secret heroes and the importance of friendship, standing up to bullies," Shuber says.

"But I think the one theme, the one that resonates the most with kids is that the show is about child empowerment."■

Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang runs until Jan. 3, 2016 at the Young People's Theatre in Toronto. For tickets, visit youngpeoplestheatre.ca or call 416-862-2222.

Free Times Cafe brunch celebrates 20th anniversary

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Bella! Did Ya Eat?, the weekly brunch buffet that Free Times Cafe owner Judy Perly launched at the restaurant two decades ago, hasn't only been a boon to the business, but something that's kept her feeling personally anchored.

"I call it my Prozac," the 65-year-old Perly said with a chuckle, her mass of red hair coiled atop her head.

"There were times when the restaurant generally wasn't doing that well, and I said, 'This isn't good, but the brunch is good.' For 10 years, I came every Saturday night and cut up all the desserts for the next day. I was single at the time, and the brunch got me through some difficult times… It's helped me develop a better social persona, to get out there more and feel proud of myself."

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Bella! Did Ya Eat? as well as the 35th anniversary of the Free Times Cafe, the College Street restaurant that Perly, a former high school art teacher and private caterer, purchased in 1980 in an attempt to support her then-visual art career.

Featuring what Perly calls "home-cooked food from around the world" – dishes like quiche, pasta and falafel – Free Times also became known as a hub for folk and acoustic musicians, who, by 1983, were performing in the restaurant's back room seven nights a week.

Following a fire in 1990 that saw Free Times temporarily close down, the restaurant was struggling, and Perly, understanding the popularity of brunch and feeling a personal tug to get back in touch with her Jewish roots, conceived of Bella! Did Ya Eat?, an all-you-can-eat buffet featuring dozens of authentic, mostly Ashkenazi Jewish dishes like fried eggs and onion, herring, gefilte fish, smoked salmon, bagels, potato latkes, blintzes and challah – much of it made in house.

"I knew what my Jewish customers wanted – the food on the table before they got there, reservations so they could change them… I knew they were picky eaters so I needed a foolproof concept," Perly explained, noting that the brunch was successful from Day 1.

Bella! Did Ya Eat?, which, over the years, has expanded to include about 50 different dishes for a fixed price of $20, accompanied by a set of live klezmer music, offers two seatings every Sunday.

"We're the only place in the world to have weekly concerts of klezmer and Jewish music… We'll have Yiddish music or music by a Jewish composer, and sometimes a little Hebrew," Perly said, listing bands like Beyond the Pale, Sultans of String and The Shpielers as some of the regular performers.

A dozen or so bands have formed as a result of the weekly stage provided by the brunch, Perly said, and the brunch has been integral to the evolution of klezmer and Yiddish music in Toronto, which has seen something of a revival of late.

The restaurant's overall clientele is roughly 80 per cent Jewish, but Perly said the brunch draws more of a 50/50 ratio of Jews to non-Jews, the former often expressing the sense of nostalgia the experience evokes for the food of their childhood, and the latter appreciating the exposure to traditional Jewish fare.

Judy Perly in front of a picture she painted of her late mother, hung in the Free Times Cafe.

> *We're the only place in the world to have weekly concerts of klezmer and Jewish music*

While she regrets that more Jewish clients don't attend the brunch – something she attributes to the difficulty for many of driving from their north Toronto homes through downtown traffic – Perly said that the restaurant has a huge demand at Chanukah for their latkes, which can be ordered to go, and that Free Times is often rented out for private events like bar mitzvah parties.

"The brunch is layered with a lot of soul… Plus, we're situated right in the heart of the old Jewish neighbourhood, so it brings older Jewish people who themselves grew up here," Perly said.

Having grown up on Eglinton Avenue above her Canadian-born parents' business, Perly's Maps, Perly said Bella! Did Ya Eat? has made her feel more connected to her late mother, Bella, a number of whose belongings she has incorporated into the homey, old world décor of the restaurant's added-on bistro dining section, and to her eastern European grandmother, whose inquiring after whether her daughter had yet eaten supper inspired the buffet's name.

"I put all these from my mother's house into the bistro… as well as incorporating my mother and grandmother's dishes into the brunch because I didn't have my own children and wasn't doing Friday night dinners for them. I wanted to find a way to have more soul around my own life in terms of being Jewish."

Free Times Cafe will celebrate its 35th anniversary on Dec. 15 with musical performances, including a Yiddish cabaret, and a deluxe buffet featuring chicken, brisket, salmon and vegetarian dishes. ■

www.freetimescafe.com
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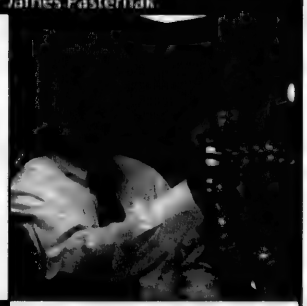
Toronto City Councillor James Pasternak

Wishes Everyone in the Community a Happy Chanukah!



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PFAFF LEASING

Chanukah: the greatest Hollywood blockbuster never told

Chaimie and Leizer

A few years back, Mel Gibson was set to make a Chanukah movie, but it never happened. This alone might be proof of Hashem's powers, if not insofar as defending the Jewish people, at least defending His script from a lunatic director – albeit a great one. (And, yes, reconciling that is a proverbial "YidLife Crisis.")

But seriously: it's lunacy that we still haven't cooked up an oily blockbuster for Chanukah. The truth is, we suck when it comes to marketing our very own brand: Judaism.

We at YidLife Crisis are humbly doing our *bis!* to change this. You're welcome.

On that note… do we have a Chanukah picture for you!

Picture it: Sicily, 1943. (Wait, no, that's us channeling Estelle Getty. Backtrack...)

Picture it: Judea, 200 B.C.E. In a time of Hellenistic influence, secular Jews entranced by implanted Greek culture shake the foundations of tribal Jewish identity in Israel. (Sound familiar? Picture us, but in togas. Actually, best not do that.) Enter a hardy family of rebels who take things into their own hands. Their name? Maccabees (technically, Hasmoneans, but Maccabees rolls nicer off the tongue).

OK, here's where it gets fun: we think there's a huge opportunity to play off the dual hot topics of mega-bearded hipster hunks and mega-bearded religious fundamentalists – and give them all washboard abs – wait for it – dripping in eight days of oil. We're thinking *300* meets *Fiddler*, or *Twilight* meets *Sunrise/Sunset*, where we have a few young male stars take over ancient Israel shirtlessly and shamelessly. We'd round up a few Jewish names – Jake Gyllenhaal works out nicely as a ripped halfie. Definitely throw in Zak Efron. Miles Teller's been working out, get him in there. Who else? Let's get an NFL endorsement with Julian Edelman, and he will literally close the film running a pigskin out of the Temple.

What of Antiochus? Throw in Alan Rickman and we'll truly have a minyan on set.

A proper Greek could work too: Zack Galifianakis in an Oscar-worthy performance where he flips to the other side (from comedy to serious roles. And conversion to Judaism, because why not?).

And the title? *Days* is big now, like *8 Days*, or *8 Days Later*. Maybe something with *Fire* in it, like *Flames of our Fathers* or the hip-hop tinged *8 Daze of Blaze*. Acronyms are huge, so we might go with *N.G.H.S.* (*Ness Gadol Haya Sham*). And yes, it'll play in Israel as *N.G.H.P.*

Unconvinced? Fine, we can go the Disney route and create the Maccabees as a collection of adorable bearded bees. Link in a cross promotion with Seinfeld's *Bee Story*, and now we're selling small plastic LED chanukiyot as part of the first ever Glatt Kosher Happy Meals (re-branded "Reluctantly Satisfied Meals"). The possibilities are endless.

We think we're onto something here. But the grander, tragic problem is that few Jews would dare put something so "Jewish" onscreen. At least, there remain a few players who don't divorce themselves from their heritage. Spielberg and Weinstein could have changed their names to Lord Stephen Peel and His Honourable Harvard Winetasting, but didn't, proving they still have the proverbial *beitzim* to bring Jewish tales to screens.

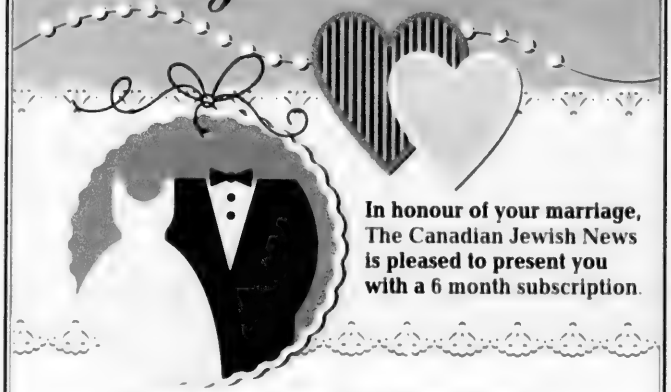
If you ask us, it's time we "owned" our Judaism and broadcasted it. So, Steve, Larry, if you're listening: make this movie. Run with it. A Chanukah gift, if you will. We ask only to play the comedic relief of two Hellenists, the Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern of ancient Judea. We were meant to play the Bad Jews, plus did you see how enraptured we are with souvlaki in last year's Chanukah episode?

Hey, it's the least we can do to help (ourselves).

WE'RE WELCOME! ■

Chaimie and Leizer are Jamie Elman and Eli Batalion, co-creators of the world's first online Yiddish sitcom YidLife Crisis.

Congratulations!



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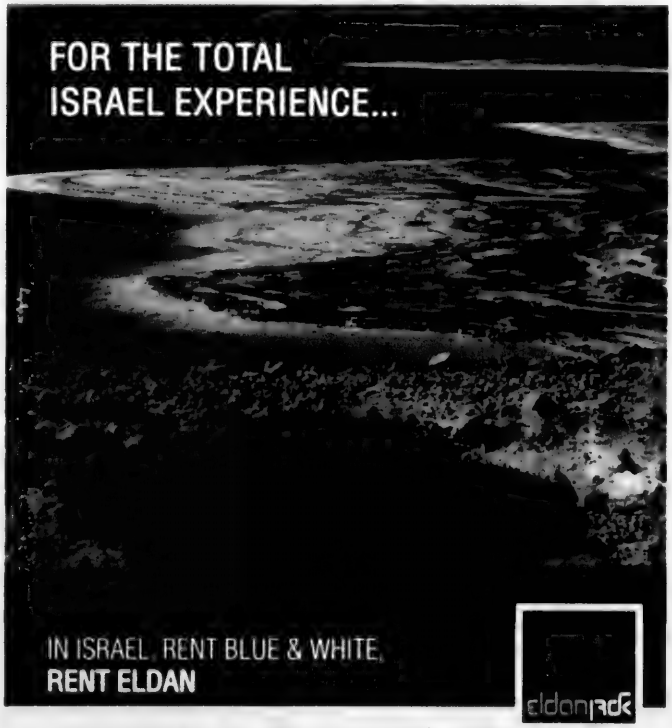

Children's book a first for Toronto-born rabbi

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

He's the author of more than 100 books about subjects including Jewish rituals and law, Jewish sexuality, and prayer, but Toronto-born Rabbi Ron Isaacs' latest book targets a different audience.

Rabbi Isaacs, the rabbi emeritus of Temple Shalom synagogue in New Jersey, where he served for the past 40 years, is the co-author of *Farmer Kobi's Hanukkah Match*, a Chanukah-themed children's book that also provides lessons on the Jewish values of welcoming guests, and compassion for animals.

"I never dreamed about doing a children's book until I found out about a member of my congregation, Karen Rostoker-Gruber, who I didn't know that well, and I didn't know that she was a writer," Rabbi Isaacs said.

Rostoker-Gruber is an award-winning children's book author and humorist, who has produced six picture books and four adult humour books. She is also a ventriloquist and performs with Maria, her puppet, in schools and libraries.

Rabbi Isaacs said that after speaking with her about writing children's books, he asked her if she'd consider working with him to write one.

"I asked Karen to show me things she'd written that had been rejected, just to get an idea of some of the books that she wrote other than the ones she published, which were short animal books," he said.

"There was one about a farmer that I found intriguing because the farmer had animals that could speak, and I read the story and I re-read the story and I said, 'I think you could take the bare bones of the plot and turn it into a Chanukah story without a whole lot of effort.'"

The story is about a young, single farmer on a moshav in Israel, who is preparing for a Chanukah date, with the help of his farm animal friends.

In an effort to impress Polly, who Farmer Kobi hopes will be his perfect match, the enthusiastic animals dote over their guest, offering her food and doing their best to make her comfortable, to no avail.

At the end of the story, which is peppered with animal-related puns ("eggz-actly" and "baa-baa ghanoush"), Polly leaves in a huff, which disappoints Farmer Kobi.

But there is a happy ending.

"Of course, this other character, Ruthy, shows up with a flat tire and you have to kind of imagine what happens, but she has her animals in the car, and she's invited in."

Although the story is built around the holiday of Chanukah, the main lessons demonstrate how guests and animals should be treated.

"It does have Chanukah baked into it, but one of the main underlying themes is how you treat a guest, and how hospitality to guests works, and how both the guest as well as the host have obligations to each other," he said.

"In this case, the guest who was the farmer's date, did not appreciate the fact that there were animals sitting at the table and was very rude to them. The animals could've gotten into a verbal fight with her, but instead, tried to calm her down by making her feel better, and offering to take her coat, and offering her food. They did everything they could to be accepted by her and she was still not happy with it, slams the door and walks out."

Rabbi Isaacs said he hopes this isn't the last children's book he gets published.

"We actually have another Farmer Kobi book that we wrote for Passover... whether it will get published or not remains to be seen, but it's a really funny one," he said.

"We have ideas for a Haggadah for families and it'll have a lot of funny stuff in it. We're still working... it is a lot of fun working with her so I hope this is just one of many books."

Farmer Kobi's Hanukkah Match, published by Apples and Honey Press, is available for order from Amazon.ca. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN

A stark look at a woman's life in Kabul

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Phyllis Chesler calls things as she sees them. She is the prototypical New Yorker, one who does not back away from letting you hear her opinion or the truth – or both when they coincide.

Chesler has been an indefatigable fighter all her life on behalf of human rights, a legendary advocate in the vanguard of the feminist movement that matured in the early 1960s. She is a psychotherapist, scholar, thinker and writer of some 14 books. These include the groundbreaking international bestseller, *Women and Madness*, and more than a decade ago, *The New Anti-Semitism*, a hard-hitting call to arms regarding the resurgent, social scourge. She is also the co-founder of the Association for Women in Psychology and the National Women's Health Network.

Chesler has never been known for pulling her punches and she pulls none in her latest book, *An American Bride in Kabul: A Memoir*.

An idealistic undergraduate student in New York in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Chesler falls in love with and eventually marries a suave, handsome, ostensibly wealthy, westernized young man from Afghanistan. Lured by a sense of romance, adventure and social purpose, she leaves her parents and the comfortable home in which she has been raised and moves with her new husband, Abdul-Kareem, to his native Afghanistan.

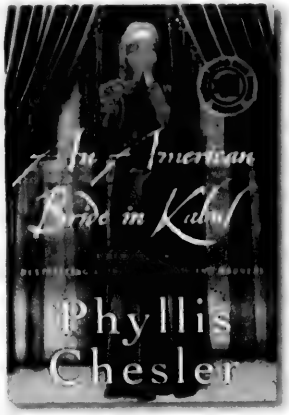
But the sense of adventure quickly collapses into a confined, suffocating existence as a kept foreign wife. The first hint of confounded dreams occurs as soon as she lands in Kabul when a government official confiscates her American passport. It is an ill omen of worse to come. She is not a citizen of Afghanistan, but in the eyes of the American diplomatic staff in Kabul, she is no longer an American. According to the customs and mores of Afghanistan, Chesler is property owned by her husband.

Still, the young bride develops a fondness for the natural splendour of the country and for some of her newly acquired family members who minister to her, especially during moments of high duress. Mostly, however, her time in Afghanistan as a foreign wife – indeed, a Jewish foreign wife – is a descent into hell.

Chesler describes her experiences in plentiful, pitiful detail. Her mother-in-law is an especially menacing presence in her life. "In the harem where I live, I am horrified by the way in which our slave-like servants are treated. The way my mother-in-law treats her female servants is criminal, tragic, barbaric, unbelievable – but apparently entirely normal in Kabul, both among the elite and among the peasantry."

The social, cultural and spiritual misery of her life is matched by its physical misery, which reaches its dangerous nadir when she develops hepatitis. "I fear that I will die and be buried in a Muslim cemetery somewhere out in the countryside. I have just turned 21 and am seriously contemplating my death. Even this is not as frightening as Abdul-Kareem's apparent indifference."

Chesler's experiences in Afghanistan do not make up the entirety of the book. Rather, they provide the jumping off point for a wider reflection on the impact of those experiences on her life as a feminist, human rights advocate. She is unsparing in what she describes as the extremely cruel exclusion – the *purdah* – of women in Afghanistan and throughout the traditionalist Muslim world. Inevitably, she also shares her thoughts on the burqa. "The burqa is not religiously mandated. In the past, many Muslim countries either banned the burqa or allowed women and their families to choose how women would dress. From a human rights point of view, the burqa demoralizes both the wearer and all women who see her: hobbled, hidden, invisible, unable or forbidden to join the social conversation."



An American Bride in Kabul: A memoir
by Phyllis Chesler

Palgrave Macmillan, 2013

This insightful account of her experiences and memories in Kabul, at times self-deprecating and humorous or biting and searing, also provides Chesler the opportunity to lift some heavy stones from her heart.

At her lowest physical and emotional point, seeking a way to spare herself further ill treatment, she writes: "This is difficult for me to write about. It is harder to admit that I was this foolish, this frightened, this alone, that I would actually jettison the religion of my ancestors for another religion about which I know absolutely nothing. But I did it. This is not something I ever tell anyone. Nevertheless I have never forgiven myself."

At a later point in the memoir, Chesler summarizes: "This is an accounting of sorts. A young Jewish American woman once came to this wondrous Asiatic country (Afghanistan) and fled harem life. She finally uncovered the history of what happened to the Jews of Afghanistan and she has told their story in order to redeem her soul. A young Jewish American woman once loved a Muslim Afghan man, and although it could never work out, they continued talking to each other down through the decades of their lives."

Subsequent sinister developments in the world, such as the rise of Al Qaeda, 9/11 and the shocking resurgence of anti-Semitism, become a backdrop for Chesler to apply some of the lessons of her Kabul life. She urges the West to face up to the challenge of arresting and turning back the march of radical, intolerant, xenophobic, violent Islamists.

"I am shaken by the inability of many people to understand that evil and injustice truly exist and that one cannot win every single battle against them. I am even more shaken by the refusal of educated and progressive Americans to understand that the concept of a global caliphate is fuelling thousands of Islamist terrorists, all of whom have explosives and some of whom have nuclear weapons.

"We can and should rescue girls and women one by one and relocate them either within Afghanistan or externally; some groups are doing this. But we cannot rescue every woman in Afghanistan – or stem the tide of Islamist violence against civilians everywhere, not only in Afghanistan, without first defeating the Islamist ideologically, politically, economically and militarily.

"One cannot reason with evil. One must defeat it," Chesler writes.

Her pointed words call to mind an occasion more than a decade ago when she told an assembly of journalists: "If we stand for peace and for justice, we may have to fight for it."

Chesler received the National Jewish Book Award for *An American Bride in Kabul: A Memoir*. In light of the times in which we live, it is an instructive read. ■

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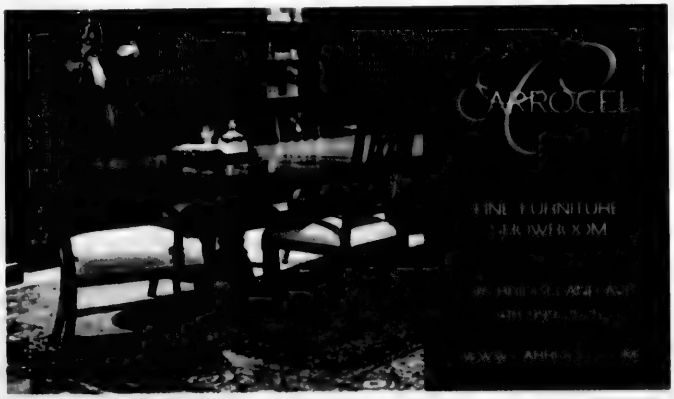

Art for seniors who are not artists

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Acclaimed Canadian artist Martin Hirschberg is planning to present a different approach to art for seniors who have never painted.

Hirschberg, who recently sold his business, The Hirschberg Design Group, and now works as an interior design consultant, says he wants to take a new direction in art for seniors.

"I have been asked numerous times where these classes for seniors are offered," says Hirschberg. "At present to my knowledge, they are not – certainly not in the way I envision them."

Along with class discussions on artists and their techniques and hands-on painting, Hirschberg wants to emphasize the social possibilities. "Above all, it must be fun," he says. He notes that he now realizes that many seniors attend book reviews and lectures and look for activities.

"Now that I have more time, I want to bring people together for an enjoyable session, to make new friends and to end up with an original acrylic painting."

Artist Martin Hirschberg plans to offer art classes for seniors.

Hirschberg spoke to *The CJN* about the benefits for seniors in interacting and enjoying their time together and experiencing something new. He emphasized the importance of social, interactive, non-structured classes.

"To me, there is no such a thing as bad art, and it is important for us to step outside our comfort zones."

The art courses will include a history of acrylic paints, selecting colours and palettes, utilizing paints to produce different painting styles and works, including looking at Andy Warhol, Paul Cézanne, Vincent Van Gogh and the pop art movement. "It should communicate with your feelings."

He adds that experts in gerontology find that creative pursuits provide older adults with multiple benefits, not the least of which is to enhance function.

Statistics indicate that art reduces depression and anxiety and helps individuals to relax. It also offers sensory stimulation.

Hirschberg has shown his paintings in many Canadian galleries and in exhibitions in the United States. His paintings are in the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario and at the Rotman Gallery in Stratford. He is an active member of the museum committee of Beth Tzedec Congregation as well as a volunteer at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

This spring, Hirschberg will conduct morning and afternoon classes at the Avenue Road Arts School, 460 Avenue Rd., south of St. Clair Ave. West. ■

For more information or to register, email martinhirschbergartist.com or phone 416-868-1210.

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MICHAEL FERMAN
Robbins Hebrew Academy is pleased to announce that Michael Ferman will be joining RHA as the Director of Admissions and Alumni starting on December 7, 2015. Michael is an alumni of RHA (formerly USDS) and joins RHA from Adath Israel Congregation. We welcome Michael to the RHA community and wish him success in his new role.
About Robbins Hebrew Academy: At RHA, we want students to explore, discover, debate and imagine the possibilities. That's why we offer a cutting-edge curriculum that teaches our students to think critically and globally, in a community that builds self-esteem and lifelong character. It's why our students go on to become society's original thinkers and principled leaders. And it's why RHA is Toronto's first Jewish school to be CAIS accredited, putting us in the company of Canada's finest schools.
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The Socialite

MC Belle Puri

Co-chairs Lisa Pullan, Debbie Jeroff, keynote speaker Yael Luttwak, co-chairs Wendi Klein and Yael Rubanenko Horwitz

Shari Gaerber, Jewish Federation Board chair Stephen Gaerber, Rachel Shanken, Jewish Federation CEO Ezra Shanken

Community speaker Ricki Thal

Alisa Bressler and table captain Dalia Bressler

Strengthening the community

Around 500 women gathered recently at Choices, Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver's annual celebration of women's support of the community. Yael Luttwak discussed the connections built among the women in her documentary film, *A Slim Peace*, about a group of Israeli, Palestinian and Bedouin women who take a six-week weight loss course together. Ricki Thal, a local community leader, shared her experience on March of the Living and spoke about how her grandparents survived the Holocaust by working in Oskar Schindler's factory. Inspiring stories, inspiring women. You go girls! ■ – *The Socialite*

Table captain Beth Bogner and Judith Cohen

Table captain Mira Robin and Freda Robin

Raffle draws at Choices, Shawna Merkur, Jodi Cristall and Rebecca Marstaller

Elyssa Manis and Shayna Goldberg

Shinshinim at Choices, Tomer Tetro, Lian Swissa and Ophir Golombek

Sue Hector and table captain Megan Laskin

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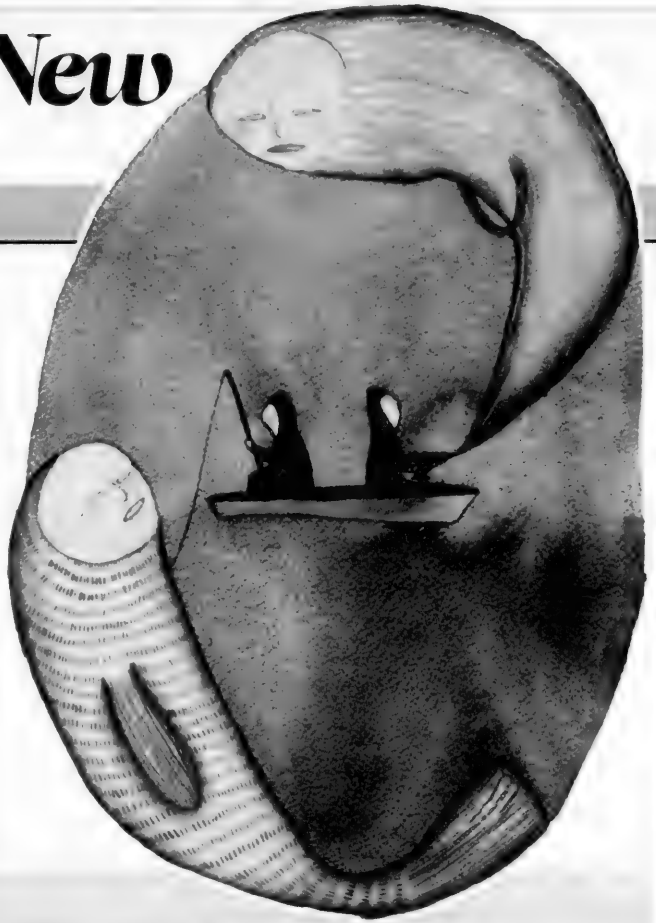
What's New

DEC. 3 - DEC. 10

by Lila Sarick



Wish come true

An exhibit by Yaara Eshet, *Cause for Celebration*, is on display in the gallery at the Miles Nadal JCC until Jan. 3.

Thursday, Dec. 3

YIDDISH VINKL
Renate Krakauer discusses her new book *Only by Blood*, noon, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $20 includes lunch. RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

POST-HOLOCAUST LITERATURE
Yael Seliger discusses "Post-Holocaust literature: 70 years after the Holocaust," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

Friday, Dec. 4

HUMAN RIGHTS SHABBAT
Congregation Darchei Noam holds a Kabbalat Shabbat exploring the refugee experience, 6:30 p.m. RSVP for dinner 416-638-4783.

Saturday, Dec. 5

CAMP RAMAH LIVE
New and returning campers in grades 1-4 are invited to a Camp Ramah baking party at Two Mom's Bakery, 6-8 p.m. $5. RSVP www.campramah.com

TORAH STUDY
Stephen Owens leads the Torah study at Beth Tikvah Congregation today.

WINTER SHULSTICE
Temple Har Zion holds a winter "Shulstice" party, 8 p.m. $20. For tickets, 647-349-4976.

DANI BOARDWALK CAFE
Play your favourite board games and enjoy desserts with DANI, 501 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill, 8 p.m. $5. 905-889-3264, ext. 231.

Sunday, Dec. 6

CHANUKAH PARTIES
Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a Chanukah carnival, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

JRCC holds a Chanukah carnival at TanenbaumCHAT, Vaughan campus, 12:30- 5 p.m. $5.

Public menorah lighting, Mel Lastman Square, 5100 Yonge St., with food and music, 6 p.m.

Beth Tikvah Sprouts holds a Chanukah carnival for children aged 1-7, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $8/$10.

Beth Emeth Synagogue holds a Chanukah Party, 6-8 p.m. $5-$12.

Chabad Russian Centre of Thornhill Woods holds a community menorah lighting and party, 4-6 p.m., North Thornhill Community Centre, 300 Pleasant Ridge.

Beth David Synagogue holds a Chanukah party, 2-4 p.m. $5/$10.

MIDRESHET YOM RISHON
Forest Hill Jewish Centre presents learning for women, 10-11:20 a.m. **Ora Ziring** discusses "Yehudah, Tamar and the sanctity of marriage"; **Rabbi Jonathan Ziring** discusses "From Chanukah to Yom Ha'atzmaut?", 446 Spadina Rd.

MEDICAL HALACHAH
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "End of life care: the laws of giving up," 8:45 a.m., Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation.

Tuesday, Dec. 8

ISRAEL STAMP CLUB
The Israel Stamp Club discusses "Where are the high values in Israeli stamps?" 7 p.m., Antibes Community Centre, 140 Antibes Dr. 416-226-2050.

THE BEATLES
Kevin Courrier discusses what the music of The Beatles meant to the world, Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, speaker at 12:30 p.m., $3/$6.

ADATH ISRAEL BOOK CLUB
Marilyn Herbert reviews *The Betrayers*, 8 p.m., Adath Israel Synagogue. $10/$15. **Beverley**, 416-499-6920.

CHUG HATANACH
Rabbi Shlomo Gemara teaches Chapter 7 of the Book of Isaiah, Beth David Synagogue, 8 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 9

CHANUKAH CAFE
Chabad Russian Centre Thornhill Woods, 8808 Bathurst St., holds a Chanukah Cafe, 8-11 p.m. Must RSVP 905-881-1919.

Thursday, Dec. 10

CHANUKAH NASH AND DRASH
Cantors David Edwards and **Jeremy Burko** perform at noon, Beth Emeth Synagogue. $15 (includes lunch). Must RSVP 416-633-3838.

Coming Events

CHANUKAH FUN
TanenbaumCHAT (North and South campuses) and Beth Emeth Synagogue present a Chanukah concert, Dec. 13, 7 p.m. $10/$15. Tickets, 416-633-3838.

Thornhill Community Shul/Aish Learning Centre holds a Chanukah concert featuring The Skullcaps, Dec. 12, 8 p.m. at 949 Clark Ave. W. $18. 905-764-1891, ext. 210.

Morris Winchevsky School celebrates Chanukah, Dec. 13, 11 a.m. at 918 Bathurst St. with music by **Mitch Smolkin.** 416-789-5502.

Temple Kol Ami celebrates Chanukah with a Rock Shabbat, Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m. RSVP for potluck dinner to jaykowal@gmail.com

SHABBAT UNPLUGGED
Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a full day of Shabbat activities, for all ages, Dec. 12.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Baycrest is looking for volunteers who have special interests or talents to share with clients. Russian-speaking volunteers also needed. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572 or email volunteer@baycrest.org

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Dec. 17 is Dec. 7. There will be no issue Dec. 31. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Circle of Care and Jewish Hospice Programs is looking for volunteers to provide in-home visiting to individuals with a life-threatening illness. A 30-hour training course is provided. Contact **Arnold Foss,** 416-635-2860, ext. 433, or afoss@circleofcare.com.

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JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

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Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call Beth Feffer, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

◗ **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Dec. 17, Big band swing concert and dance with **Lenny Graf and his Platinum Swing Orchestra,** latke lunch 12:30 p.m., concert and dance, 1-2:30 p.m. $15. RSVP 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or lisar@mnjcc.org

◗ **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9; Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.; exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org.

◗ **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Dec. 8, **Michael Klein** discusses "Looking within and exploring ourselves through dreams, Part 2," 10 a.m.; Dec. 10, lecture on "The psychology of investment and eight biases to avoid," 1:30 p.m. Book club meets Tuesdays at 1 p.m.

◗ **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; creative circle Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., bring your handiwork; Casino Rama, Dec. 16.

◗ **National Council of Jewish Women-Aviva Chapter** is looking for senior women who would like to join, 416-633-5100.

◗ **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860.

◗ **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. 416-256-1892.

◗ **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. **Judi** 416-785-0941.

◗ **Shaar Shalom Synagogue.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.

◗ **Beth Emeth Synagogue.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.

◗ **Temple Har Zion.** Wednesdays, play bridge at 9:30 a.m.; mah-jong at 1 p.m.; Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com

◗ **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge, mah-jong and canasta, Thursdays, 1:30-4 p.m. Call **Maureen,** 416-781-3514.

◗ **Beth Sholom Synagogue.** Creative exercise, lunch and cards, Wednesdays at noon. 416-783-6103.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

◗ All-male cycle class meets Thursdays, 7 p.m.

◗ Women on weights class meets Monday, Thursdays at noon; Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.

◗ **Jason Spillberg** discusses "Sugar: it's time to get your family off this stuff," Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m.

◗ Meditation workshop on peace, love and holidays, Dec. 22, 1 p.m.

◗ Yiddish conversation, Mondays starting Jan. 11, 1:30 p.m.

◗ Beginner mah-jong, Wednesdays starts Jan. 13, 10:30 a.m.

◗ Bridge level 1, Thursdays, starts Jan. 21, 10 a.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

◗ Subscribe now to the Toronto Jewish Film Society's 38th season, ext. 139.

◗ Accessible yoga for people of all abilities. Sundays to Dec. 6, 1 p.m.

◗ Behind the Curtain with **Richard Ouzounian.** The theatre critic discusses the behind-the-scenes world of theatre, Dec. 3, 1 p.m. Ext. 155.

◗ Let's talk about parenting: Discussion in Hebrew about parenting, adults only, Dec. 3, 8 p.m. Ext. 321.

◗ Chanukah pool party, Dec. 5, 6:15 p.m. Ext. 388.

◗ Chanukah fun fair, Dec. 6, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

◗ Register for winter programs, Dec. 9 members' registration; Dec. 16, general registration.

◗ From tummies to mummies: free first class for postnatal spin, Mondays at 10:30 a.m. Ext. 567.

◗ Wheel dance: learn Latin dance in a mixed abilities class. Sundays to Dec. 6, 6 p.m. Ext. 330.

◗ *Cause for Celebration,* illustrations by **Yaara Eshet,** is on display at the gallery Dec. 1- Jan.3.

◗ Why does history matter today? U of T Press authors **Steven Bednarski, Franklin Bialystok** and **Kenneth Bartlett** discuss how our society has been shaped by important moments in history, Dec. 7, 14, 21 at 1:30 p.m.

◗ Shabbat family party, free Chanukah open house, Dec. 11, 10 a.m. for children with an adult.

◗ PJ Plus free open house, Dec. 11, 11:15 a.m., for children 18 months- 3 years with an adult.

◗ Open community choir, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. with **Gillian Stecyk.** No experience or audition required.

◗ Klezmer ensemble, Tuesdays, ongoing 7:30 p.m. with **Eric Stein.** music@mnjcc.org

◗ Everyday Friends: social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Ext. 330.

◗ Young rabbis speak: Jewish identity in a hyphenated world, with **Rabbis Noah Cheses, Adam Cutler, Jordan Helfman** and **Miriam Margles,** Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m.

◗ Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Metallic Blues,* with guest speaker **Mark Clamen,** Dec. 13, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Box office opens one hour before screening time.

◗ Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. For programs, ext. 3025.

◗ Healthy U series: "Change your thoughts, change your life: how mindfulness affects your brain," Dec. 9, 7 p.m.

◗ Beginner mah-jong Tuesdays, Jan. 12-Feb. 16, 10:30 a.m.

◗ Healthy U series: "Are there drug-free options for many of our afflictions?" Jan. 16, 7 p.m. ■

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MARRIED WITH KIDS

Measuring 'Jewish'

Lauren Kramer

"We're not *very* Jewish, are we, Mom?" The question from my six-year-old daughter Maya blindsided me on a Friday afternoon. The two of us were on a road trip in Olympia, Wash., and as dusk crept stealthily upon us in the mid-afternoon, she realized Shabbat was coming, and our usual celebration thereof was nowhere in sight. A caveat: I'd made challah and Shabbat dinner plans for the family back home before we left, but somehow I'd neglected to make arrangements for the two of us.

My mind started racing. We could pick up grape juice, candles and a challah-substitute from a grocery store in town and make *Kiddush* in our hotel room, I told her. It was better than nothing, but even as I said it, I knew it would be a pretty flat way to ring in Shabbat with just two of us in attendance. So I started surfing the Internet and learned the city had three synagogues. One of them, a Reconstructionist shul, was just a hop, skip and a jump from our hotel and had regular Friday night services, followed by an Oneg Shabbat. So we purchased an edible contribution to the Oneg and headed over in time for the 7:30 p.m. service.

I'm not overly familiar with the liturgy of a Reconstructionist synagogue, but Jews are Jews, and it was comforting to find ourselves in a Jewish sanctuary, even if the prayer book looked quite different from the one I was familiar with. A group of comparative religion students sat at the back of the synagogue, their cellphones nested in the palms of their hands. As I walked past them to the front pew, I said a silent prayer that they'd have the decency to put the phones away once the service began.

The rabbi was out of town and two lay leaders, clearly thrilled to have a couple of new faces in the room, led the service from the bimah that night. There was lots of singing and light in the shul over the next hour, and at Maya's suggestion, she and I

> *No matter how many times you go to shul, you have a very special Jewish soul*

volunteered to light Shabbat candles before the congregation and recite the prayer that welcomes the Sabbath. Later, at the Oneg, we sipped grape juice, munched on challah, hummus and vegetables and chatted with members of the community before heading back to the hotel.

That's when I started pondering my daughter's comment earlier that day. How Jewish were we? In her books, when compared to our rabbi back home, it didn't seem very Jewish to be out on a Friday night with no plans for Shabbat. She was right, of course. I should have been much better prepared.

Our visit to the synagogue had redeemed the situation significantly, but I needed her to understand that Jewishness was not a gauge measured by synagogue attendance. "You are very Jewish," I told her. "No matter how many times you go to shul, you are Jewish and you have a very special Jewish soul."

Six-year-old eyes looked back at me, clearly wondering what on earth I was talking about. It was true, though. It had been Maya's questions, her prompting that led us to the doors of the synagogue that night. She'd reminded me it was not OK to skip even an occasional Shabbat, that there was no reason to, and especially not when we were strangers in a strange town.

It had taken a little effort to get to the right place at the right time, but we left the synagogue doors feeling connected and deeply comforted by the combination of Shabbat songs, familiar foods and warm "Shabbat Shalom" greetings.

I knew then that if Jewishness were measurable, hers would be one of great depth, even at so young an age. So the next time she wonders how Jewish we are, I'll be able to say with confidence, "*Very*, my darling. Very, very Jewish." ■

Mazel Tov!

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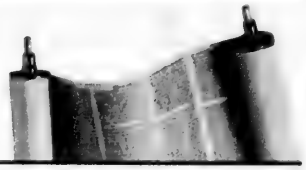
Parshah

Vayeshev | Genesis 37:1-40:23



Maharat Rachel Kohl Finegold says mealtime can nourish our bodies and our minds
Rabbi Denise Handlarski sees in the Chanukah lights a reminder to pursue justice
Rabbi Yirmi Cohen suggests that religions need to be more tolerant of each other

Maharat Rachel Kohl Finegold

We have all experienced great dinner conversation. When we break bread as a group, fruitful discussion can flow, and perhaps even transformative ideas can develop.

In this week's parshah, just after the brothers have thrown Joseph into the pit, ostensibly to leave him there to die, the verse states, "And they sat down to eat bread" (Genesis 37:25).

It is unlikely that the brothers could casually break bread together in the wake of such a crime against one of their own. It seems that over the course of that meal, a thoughtful conversation ensued in which the brothers debated the morality of what they had just done. This led Judah to suggest that rather than leave Joseph in the pit, which meant certain death, they could sell him instead to merchants who were heading to Egypt.

According to the Midrash (Pesikta Rabbati 10), the phrase "And they sat down to eat bread" indicates more than simply a moment when the brothers fed themselves. It signifies that they fed the entire civilized world through what developed from that meal. Their decision to sell Joseph was what indirectly led to Egypt's prosperity during famine under Joseph's leadership. This ultimately led to the survival of so many, including Joseph's own family.

It was only because the brothers were willing to re-examine their actions during that fateful meal, to engage in lively and challenging dinner conversation, that they eventually proposed a different solution.

Let's take advantage of our communal meals – whether they are quiet family dinners, or nights out with friends – to create opportunities for thoughtful exchange of ideas. Mealtimes can be nourishing for both body and mind, and can create much food for thought. ■

Maharat Rachel Kohl Finegold is director of education and spiritual enrichment at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim in Montreal.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

If ever there was a time we needed the light of Chanukah, it is now. Lately we have seen horrific violence in Israel and terror attacks in Beirut, Paris and Nigeria. We as a global community are on edge. We have seen the darkest of what humanity is capable; we need to find our light.

My wish is that as Jews and Canadians we work hard to combat the darkness that may arise within ourselves and our communities. In Canada, there has been an immediate response highlighting both sides of humanity – the darkness and the light.

On the one hand, a mosque was damaged by arson in Peterborough, Ont., in an ugly display of Islamophobia. But then the community responded by raising in excess of $100,000 to support the mosque in its rebuild. Churches and the one synagogue in town offered up their buildings for Muslim prayer during the rebuilding. The community spoke loudly and clearly that the actions of a few do not represent the feelings of the many. It was a horrible event, with a beautiful response.

Similarly, many Canadians began raising objections to bringing in refugees from Syria, themselves fleeing terror. And yet there is another current that sees the humanity in the refugees. I am inspired by the myriad Jewish voices, across the political spectrum, speaking out against those who would close our borders to those in need. We need to be brave in the face of fear. And we need always to pursue justice.

We fight terror and radicalization in many ways, but part of that fight is acknowledging that love and hope need to be stronger than hate and despair. Isn't that the lesson of Chanukah? Our ancestors banded together to resist oppression. They fought hate. They worked to ensure difference would be respected. The light of Chanukah reminds us of their pursuit of justice, and our call to follow suit. ■

Rabbi Denise Handlarski is spiritual leader of Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen

As we begin the Festival of Lights, with the backdrop of chaos in the world, in the wake of tragic events in Paris and Israel, we look to the Torah for inspiration. It's an appropriate time to discuss a mitzvah, "the Seven Noachide Laws," which were given to Noah after the flood to ensure that humanity would not degenerate into a jungle again.

At Mount Sinai, the Jews were charged to be a light unto the nations and to help the world recognize that there is a higher power to whom we are responsible, and who observes and knows our actions. The laws consist of prohibitions against idolatry, blasphemy, homicide, forbidden relations, robbery, and cruelty, along with one positive command: to establish courts of justice.

If enough of us incorporate these laws into our lives, we'd soon see a different world.

It's interesting that many religions say that if one doesn't accept that religion, one goes to hell. Parts of Christianity say that if one doesn't accept Jesus, one merits eternal damnation. In the Qur'an, one is called an infidel. Judaism is unique, as it says that a non-Jew does not need to convert, but only accept the Seven Noachide Laws and he's good the way he is, and goes to paradise. The world's religions need to be more tolerant of each other, as long as they keep these seven laws, not to kill, steal, etc.

Unlike the Shabbat candles, the Chanukah candles are lit when it is dark outside, and the Jew comes to illuminate the darkness. The Maccabees chased away the forces of darkness with swords. We do it with candles. As we gather around the menorah – and add a few calories as we savour those delicious latkes – let's also add more mitzvot. For our brothers and sisters in Israel, France and everywhere, may we merit the time where there will be no more darkness and only light, with the Chanukah menorah, in the Third Temple in Jerusalem, in our days. ■

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen is spiritual leader at Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation in Toronto. yirmicohen@sympatico.ca

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London exhibit celebrates centenary of Ben Uri collection

NANCY WIGSTON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A fine exhibit of visual art with Jewish and émigré roots has been drawing enthusiastic crowds to the Inigo Rooms, in London's Somerset House since early July. Two years in the planning, *Out of Chaos: Ben Uri: 100 Years in London*, on until Dec. 13, has been dazzling visitors with its centenary celebration of works culled from the permanent collection of the Ben Uri Gallery and Museum.

A hundred years ago, the Jewish community in Whitechapel in London's East End, founded an "art society," featuring works by artists of Jewish descent. Eventually the Ben Uri – the art society that began as war raged in Europe and modernism was sweeping the art world –achieved accredited museum status.

Ben Uri is now home to a permanent collection of 1,300 works by 390 artists, ranging across 30 different mediums. Its reach is truly international. A wide variety of artworks greet visitors to *Out of Chaos*, from 21st-century works like the enchanting *Morning Crescent* by Frank Auerbach, to mid-20th-century pieces by Marc Chagall and Chaim Soutine, and finally, to very contemporary conceptual pieces.

As co-curator Rachel Dickson explains, the 1915 gallery was "named after Bezalel Ben Uri, the first artist mentioned in the Bible, who decorated the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple in Jerusalem. [The name] also relates to Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts, founded in Jerusalem in 1906." Ben Uri remains the oldest Jewish cultural organization in the United Kingdom.

The themes of "identity and migration" anchor the centenary show, a refocusing, as it were, of Ben Uri's roots that reflects London's evolving multicultural realities. The celebration comes at a crucial time. Ben Uri's temporary home in St. John's Wood means that the public cannot view most of its vast collection, which has grown over the years to encompass migrant experiences both in and beyond Britain.

Ben Uri now describes itself as a "Museum of Art, Identity and Migration," a "very recent change," Dickson says, that came about "following an audit of the collection, when we realized about two-thirds of the works in the collection are by émigrés of some sort or other, born in one country, deceased or practising in another."

Choosing from the museum's vast collection was a daunting task. "The masterpieces of course selected themselves," Dickson says, "but lesser works were much trickier." Masterworks in the show include *La Soubrette* (1933) by Soutine. Writing in the *Financial Times*, critic Jackie Wullschlager called the Soutine "the best in the U.K.,... a violently tactile representation of a weary, wary maid in white apron."

Dora Holzhandler's *My Grandfather in Auschwitz*

Eva Frankfurter's *West Indian Waitresses*

Marc Chagall's *Apocalypse en Lilas, Capriccio*

Another stunning, rare piece is Chagall's *Apocalypse en Lilas, Capriccio* (1945), a work dating from Chagall's years as a war exile in New York.

Alongside famous names like these are also lesser-known artists, including a substantial representation of works by women. A portrait of two *West Indian Waitresses*, taking their break in a Lyons Corner House, was painted by Eva Frankfurther, whose family escaped Germany for Britain in 1939. Her work shows empathy for faces that were changing London in the 1950s – the same friends she made while working nights at a Lyons Corner House in Piccadilly and painting during the day.

It's hard not to have favourites in a show of this depth, and the exhibit's extensive website (www.benuri100.org) encourages viewers to comment on individual works of art, share their stories both on the site and on social media, and rate the pictures on a scale of one to five stars.

Many people love the painting chosen for the cover of the exhibit's companion catalogue (by Rachel Dickson and Sarah MacDougall). This striking anti-war painting in the modern style, *Merry-Go-Round* (1916) by artist Mark Gertler, drew praise from such luminaries as writer D.H. Lawrence. Others did not understand its meaning, and there were no buyers for what has become such a "powerful image" in Dickson's words.

Gertler, although frequently lauded by his peers, was unrewarded with success in his lifetime. In 1939, the Londoner of Jewish-Austrian heritage succumbed to despair. His unsold *Merry-Go-Round* – its vivid oranges and blues, its pleasure-seekers' smiles forever frozen in terror – found a home at Ben Uri, before being sold to the Tate in 1984, when "Ben Uri was in difficult financial circumstances, " says Dickson.

Ironically, it is now Ben Uri that needs to find a new home. Chair David Glasser says a successful search for a large space in central London will complete the evolution of the Ben Uri and create an accessible museum focusing on themes of identity and migration, underpinned by the Ben Uri's own history and collection. (Certainly the timing seems right.) A bid has been made for 30,000 square feet in Piccadilly, just down the road from the Royal Academy. What's needed now are philanthropists and visionaries to share and fund the Ben Uri's vision. ■

Out of Chaos: Ben Uri: 100 Years in London, until Dec. 13, www.benuri100.org

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 3, 2015

Rabbi Ron Kronish: Interfaith dialogue is part of peace

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Rabbi Ron Kronish is a writer, educator and the founder and director of the Interreligious Coordinating Council of Israel (ICCI), a department of the group Rabbis for Human Rights.

The ICCI's mission is to harness the common values of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and transform religion from a force of division and extremism into one of reconciliation and coexistence. It works with about 60 Jewish, Muslim and Christian organizations within Israel, as well as with some international groups.

Rabbi Kronish visited Toronto in early October to participate in the two-part Ralph & Roslyn Halbert Visiting Scholars lecture series, presented by Beth Tzedec Congregation, Canadian Friends of Hebrew University, the Multi-Faith Centre for Spiritual Study and Practice and the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies.

Along with Sheikh Gassan Manasra, a writer, scholar and director of the Islamic Cultural Center in Nazareth, Rabbi Kronish addressed interreligious dialogue in Israel and the West Bank, and Arab-Jewish coexistence in Israel, at the Multi-Faith Centre and at Beth Tzedec.

The CJN spoke to Rabbi Kronish about the ICCI's work and his vision for peace-building.

Where are you from originally and how did you end up living in Israel?
I'm from New York City and I grew up in Miami. After rabbinical school and after I got an education doctorate, I moved to Israel.

Describe the circumstances that led to you founding the ICCI in 1991.
Another interfaith organization in Israel had fallen on hard times and many people left it and came to me – I was working in a Jewish communal organization at that time – and four or five of us there said, "We need to found something new, but let's start a council of organizations instead of just one." So we founded a council for institutions and started with about 70 member organizations. We grew up alongside the peace process of the 1990s. We came onto the scene as an organization that did interreligious dialogue as a form of peace-building.

What are the ICCI's main activities?
We organize dialogue groups with religious leaders, young adults and educators; we do public education via lectures and symposia in North America, Europe and other places; we do social networking via Facebook and blogging; and we co-ordinate interreligious activism with the Tag Meir Forum to combat Jewish and Muslim hate crimes.

The online description of the lectures you and Sheikh Manasra gave in Toronto says you present an alternative vision of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process – one based not on peace treaties or other political mechanisms, but on interreligious dialogue and interaction. Do you believe that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be resolved through interfaith dialogue alone?
Not quite. I would say there are two parts to the conflict. One is political: we'll need a political solution that will be done by the people who do politics. But we'll also need a peace-building solution that's not a piece of paper but a set of guidelines and ways to live together as people, as communities with different religions. That's the part I'm working on.

I don't believe my work will replace the peace process of the politicians, but rather it will supplement it.

The role of interreligious dialogue in times of conflict, when the peace talks have broken down, is to keep the dream alive and hope alive. We continue now to meet Jews, Muslims and Christians inside Israel despite all the difficulties, with the hope that, when the politicians one day reach a solution, we'll be able to do our work in comprehensive ways. We've seen from conflicts in places like northern Ireland and South Africa that when a conflict is solved, people in civil society who'd previously played a quiet role become much more active in helping to cement the peace.

Rabbi Ron Kronish

In Israel, after a peace treaty is made, those of us who are religious leaders, educators, youth leaders, etc. will have to help people on both sides learn to live in peace. In the '90s, when the peace process in Israel was strong and agreements were being signed, many people turned to interreligious dialogue because they wanted to know, "With whom am I going to live in peace?" We can't have one part of the process without the other.

The ICCI has worked for the past several years to quash acts of domestic violence such as the so-called "Tag Mechir" or "price tag" violent acts done by extreme right-wing Jewish settlers. What does the organization's work around this look like?
We've been involved in the "Tag Meir" or "light tag" coalition of Jewish and other religious groups fighting against hate crimes and extremist violence. So, whenever Muslims, Christians or Jews in Israel are hurt by religious violence, we express empathy and are involved in educational programs to counter this.

Israel has a lot on its plate, to put it mildly. But one of the issues that has come to the fore in the past three or four years is the rise of Jewish religious extremism. Most of this has been vandalism, but recently there's also been the killing of innocent Palestinians.

We're pushing against this on three fronts: the law enforcement front – advocating to bring these criminals to trial; the educational front – we lobby the Knesset education committee to create education around this violence; and public sympathy demonstrations, to call attention to these acts. It's a problem that the Israeli prime minister hasn't acknowledged the Jewish extremist violence. There's been some progress in this area, but not enough.

Do you advocate for a two-state solution?
The ICCI doesn't get involved in politics in that way, so we have no explicit stance on a two-state solution.

I would say it's fairly implicit there should be a negotiated two-state solution and that both sides will have to make painful strides for peace, but the ICCI doesn't make statements about that per se. We say peace is our goal and that dialogue, plus education, is our method. I personally don't place all blame for the conflict on one side or the other. A two-state solution isn't perfect, but it's better than the alternatives, and if it does happen, then we still have a long road to go down to truly achieve peace after all these years of conflict.

Even if there is a peaceful resolution tomorrow, our work won't be done. There's the real long-term work to be done around Jews, Christians and Muslims learning to live together. That's a challenge that will take several decades. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
President

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Remembering Louis Rasminsky

Backstory

ALLAN LEVINE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The photographs of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's new cabinet that show men and women of diverse religions, ethnic groups and backgrounds is yet another example of how much Canada has changed during the past five decades.

Fifty-four years ago, John Diefenbaker's cabinet members were white Protestant and Catholic middle-aged men. The one exception was Ellen Fairclough, the first woman Canadian cabinet minister. There was also Michael Starr, the first Canadian cabinet minister of Ukrainian descent.

That's the way it had always been in Ottawa. Women and ethnic minorities, including Jews, were few and far between in positions of power in government or the bureaucracy. Though by the 1950s several provinces had passed progressive human rights legislation, eliminating blatant discrimination like anti-Semitic property covenants, the upper echelons of Canadian society generally remained closed to anyone but members of the country's Anglo establishment.

In 1961, however, Diefenbaker made one truly enlightening appointment. He selected Louis Rasminsky, a brilliant Jewish banking and finance expert, as the third governor of the Bank of Canada, a position he held until 1973.

The Diefenbaker government had been embroiled in a nasty public feud over monetary policy with Rasminsky's predecessor, James Coyne, who had resigned. Rasminsky was the deputy governor and Canada's key player on the International Monetary Fund. He was the obvious person to replace Coyne. Still, in an era when there were no Jewish executives at Canada's chartered banks, when restrictions on hiring Jews in various professions persisted, and when social clubs had gentile-only membership rules, Rasminsky's appointment was fairly remarkable.

Rasminsky, who died in 1998 at the age of 90, was born in Montreal. His father's family had its roots in Poland and his mother came from a prominent Jewish family in St. Catherines, Ont. As a young man, Lou, as he was called, was a committed Zionist and involved with Young Judaea. The Rasminskys moved to Toronto, and in 1925 Lou graduated from Harbord Collegiate. A stellar student, he was his class valedictorian. He continued his education at the University of Toronto. When he did not win a graduate scholarship to Cambridge, one of his professors convinced a wealthy member of the Toronto Jewish community to create a new scholarship. Owing to that financial support, Rasminsky was able to study at the London School of Economics, an opportunity that changed his life.

In 1930, when he was only 22 years old, he beat out 300 other candidates and was hired by the League of Nations as an economist. As he later told the story, upon receiving the appointment he cabled his girlfriend, Lyla Rotenberg, in Toronto: "Have accepted job League of Nations at 13,700 Swiss francs [per year]. Will you marry me?" She answered: "What is the exchange rate of the Swiss franc?" The couple soon married, though their son, Michael Rasminsky, has said that this oft-repeated anecdote is "apocryphal."

Rasminsky eventually left Geneva and joined the nascent Bank of Canada in 1939. While Rasminsky was a star at the bank, particularly after World War II when he played a key role in establishing a viable international monetary system, his ascension to the position of governor was repeatedly blocked because of anti-Semitism. As his biographer, Bruce Muirhead, has noted, in the early 1950s, MPs asked in the House of Commons "Why it was that a Polish Jew was considered fit to manage the country's foreign exchange?" And in official circles, it was known that the chartered banks did not want a Jew as head of the Bank of Canada. That prejudice held until Diefenbaker became prime minister.

Rasminsky insisted that the country's monetary policy was ultimately the responsibility of the federal government, a significant clarification of the relationship between the government and the bank. Rasminsky tried to adhere to the "Keynesian prescription of maintaining low interest rates to promote job growth." Near the end of his tenure in the volatile early 1970s, he was compelled to set interest rates higher.

Charming with a great sense of humour, Louis Rasminsky was, Muirhead has written, "a man of honesty, integrity, and purpose" and arguably the most "humanitarian" central banker Canada has ever had. ■

Historian Allan Levine's most recent book is Toronto: Biography of a City.

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Steeles Memorial Chapel

Berger, Miriam	Oct. 31, 2015	1 Northwestern Ave
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Davidzon, David	Oct. 31, 2015	306 Finch Ave E
Friman, Lily	Nov. 1, 2015	205 Cummer Ave
Ross, Wilfred	Nov. 1, 2015	42 Ingelwood Ave
Marmorestein, Magdalena	Nov. 1, 2015	3000 Bathurst St
Esch, Honey	Nov. 2, 2015	Private
Gebien, Gayle	Nov. 2, 2015	23 Hollywood Ave
Wolstat, Bertha	Nov. 4, 2015	5935 Bathurst St
Lichterman, Jeanne	Nov. 4, 2015	Private
Silberberg, Lil	Nov. 5, 2015	333 Clark Ave W
Rosenbek, Dr. Clarence	Nov. 5, 2015	Private
Srubiski, Haya	Nov. 5, 2015	10 Trench St
Starr, Edis Roslyn	Nov. 6, 2015	135 Waterloo Ave
Nisker, Ruth	Nov. 6, 2015	68 McMorran Cres
Friedman, Frances	Nov. 6, 2015	42 Purdon Dr
Greenberg, Gad	Nov. 6, 2015	58 Cliffwood Rd
Atkins, Nellie Sarah	Nov. 7, 2015	289 Burnett Ave
Naglie, Flora	Nov. 7, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Hyman, Miles	Nov. 7, 2015	29 Stonedene Blvd
Schmoulevitch, Elianor	Nov. 7, 2015	Private
Schwartz, Saul	Nov. 8, 2015	3 Dinan St
Richman, Arthur	Nov. 8, 2015	1555 Finch Ave E
Goody, Marilyn	Nov. 8, 2015	866 Sheppard Ave W
Elin, Leon	Nov. 9, 2015	Private
Pinkus, Sarah	Nov. 10, 2015	1555 Finch Ave E
Kellen, Michael	Nov. 11, 2015	35 Redmount Rd
Pelchovitz, Harold	Nov. 11, 2015	11 Townsgate Dr
Lipton, Shirley	Nov. 11, 2015	7460 Bathurst St
Halpert, Rusty	Nov. 12, 2015	1500 Steeles Ave W
Gilbert, Jerry	Nov. 12, 2015	10 Torresdale Ave
Lublin, Helen	Nov. 12, 2015	485 Patricia Ave
Vanderheym, Jack	Nov. 13, 2015	350 Red Maple Rd
Lifschitz, Mary	Nov. 13, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Braslavsky, Grigory	Nov. 14, 2015	Private
Krebs, Harvey	Nov. 14, 2015	44 Michael Crt
Kenigsberg, Rita	Nov. 14, 2015	2 Neptune Dr
Ionina, Eda	Nov. 16, 2015	Private
Kruglakov, Bella	Nov. 16, 2015	6200 Bathurst St
Sherman, Sarah	Nov. 16, 2015	3560 Bathurst St

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Shirley Warner	Nov 17/15	3560 Bathurst Street
Bunny Bockner	Nov 17/15	41 Heatherton Way
Nira Blinda Ben Arosh	Nov 19/15	20 Prince Arthur Ave.
Phil Young	Nov 18/15	784 Centre Street
Martin Richman	Nov 18/15	1 Benvenuto Place
Loraine Emanuel	Nov 18/15	5351 Yonge Street
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Inside

Getting ready to welcome Syrians refugees to Canada

Community groups, shuls and school prepare as first wave of migrants arrive. **PAGES 12, 14, 16**

Happy Chanukah!

A new translation of Sholom Aleichem, a meditation on Shabbat by Oliver Sacks, and more. **SPECIAL SECTION**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

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Vancouver	3:55 p.m.	5:09 p.m.

Chanukah in an interfaith age

Intermarried couples try to navigate the Jewish Festival of Lights and the Christmas holiday. **PAGE 8**
PLUS, Chanukah and the war on terror **PAGE 4.** Why aren't there any decent Chanukah movies? **PAGE 46**

They'll always have Paris

Trudeau, Bibi meet. **PAGE 18**
PLUS: Canada votes against UN anti-Nazism motion. **PAGE 19**

One on one with Tzipi Livni

Q&A: Zionist Union co-leader says the West must be ready to defend its values. **PAGE 62**

Woman's pain was Sinatra's gain

Torontonian who lost her spouse penned Sinatra's first big hit, *I'll Never Smile Again*. **PAGE 42**

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Prof is apparently not into queens, and a major archeological discovery

Repulsed by royalty

An Israeli math professor took his oath of Canadian citizenship in Toronto last week, then immediately recanted the part about swearing allegiance to the Queen, calling it "repulsive." He pledged his loyalty to Canada and its people instead. Dror Bar-Natan, 49, was one of three residents who were part of a failed constitutional challenge to the oath that was dismissed by the Ontario Court of Appeals in 2014. But the court said new citizens are free to publicly renounce the royalty portion of the oath if they disagree with it. The University of Toronto professor, who has been in Canada for 13 years, told the citizenship judge in advance of his plans. The judge thanked him for his honesty.

Biblical artifact found in dump site

A 2,700-year-old seal bearing the name of a Judean king was found in an ancient refuse dump at the foot of the Temple Mount's southern wall by archeologists from Hebrew University. The discovery, announced Dec. 2, is the first seal impression of an Israelite or Judean king ever found in a recognized archeological excavation. The 0.5 X 0.5 inch oval seal reads "Belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz king of Judah," and has an image of a two-winged sun, with wings turned downward, flanked by two ankh symbols. Hezekiah was the Judean king from 727 BCE to 698 BCE. The seal was found in excavations conducted from 2009 to 2013.

Ancient seal bears the name of King Hezekiah

Woman allowed to remarry without *get*

A U.S. woman who was central to Orthodoxy's efforts to reform how it deals with recalcitrant husbands in divorce cases has remarried, after a rabbi annulled her first union because her former partner reportedly didn't disclose his severe mental health issues prior to their nuptials. Tamar Epstein remarried Sept. 24 in Memphis, Tenn., in a halachically recognized ceremony. She wed Aharon Friedman in 2006 and got a civil divorce in 2010, but he still hasn't given her a *get*. They have an eight-year-old daughter. The Philadelphia rabbi who "freed" Epstein said that had she known Friedman had paranoia and obsessive compulsive disorder, she wouldn't have married him, and thereby annulled the union. ■

Gematria

99%

The percentage of shares that Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg and wife Priscilla Chan have pledged to give to charity in their lifetimes. The shares are worth about $45 billion (US)

$1 million

The value of a book deal signed by *Saturday Night Live* alumnus and second-term U.S. Sen. Al Franken (Minnesota) to write about his time in the U.S. Congress.

Quotable

"We need to stick to our vision of two democratic states.

— Israeli MK and Zionist Union co-leader Tzipi Livni. See full interview on p. 62.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Mark Mietkiewicz looks at emergency workers in Israel dealing with recent stabbings.

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

Ordaining women as rabbis

Change, as Rabbi Lila Kagedan alluded to in her article, is difficult and slow ("Why Orthodox Judaism needs female rabbis," Nov. 26). The reasoning behind such a shift in a religious belief could possibly take centuries to accept. But why not now?

I am more than sure that Rabbi Avi Weiss, founder of Yeshivat Maharat, where these women received smichah, has the knowledge, credibility and sincerity to conduct this change.

These women are brilliant scholars who, just like their male counterparts, can perform the functions of a rabbi. Call them what you want, they are trained and learned in rabbinical discourse and deserve the smichah they receive. Not accepting these credible and most deservingly incredible achievements is the dilemma for the individual who doesn't accept them.

Even for myself, the challenge of accepting female rabbis will come with a bit of resistance. However, I am reminded of all the changes in my life that I resisted and in time became second nature.

The truth is these women are learned, committed to their heritage and dedicated to our communities.

Elizabeth Bright
Cote St. Luc, Que.

Those critical of the Rabbinical Council of America's rejection of female ordination are welcome to argue with it. However, their arguments should reflect the Jewish talent for analytical thinking, particularly when they come from a rabbi. Rabbi means teacher, and a teacher should, first and foremost, be teaching his or her students to think analytically.

Rabbi Lila Kagedan and letter writer Sofia Freudenstein both bemoaned how the RCA decision diminished their ability to participate in Jewish tradition. Surely, they must acknowledge they are seeking to change tradition.

They are welcome to argue why tradition should change, but they should not try to fool themselves or others by saying they are embracing tradition.

Rabbi Shlomo Schwartz
Toronto

Canada at the UN

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) recently engaged in its annual Israel-bashing session, involving the adoption of one-sided, politically motivated and unconstructive resolutions that condemn only Israel while ignoring the actions of the Palestinians or Israel's other adversaries.

Canada's Jewish community has always viewed Canada's voting record on such resolutions as a litmus test of this country's support for Israel ("Trudeau government backs Israel at United Nations," Dec. 3).

So it was that Jewish support, reflected in votes and financial contributions, shifted from the Liberals to the Conservative Party in reaction to the Chrétien government's practice throughout the 1990s and early 2000s of abstaining on or supporting UNGA resolutions unfairly critical of Israel. By contrast, Stephen Harper's Conservative's record of consistently opposing all such resolutions was overwhelmingly perceived by Canadian Jews as an indication of that government's strong support for Israel.

It is, therefore, encouraging to note that the new Liberal government, led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, voted against the resolutions condemning Israel at the UN General Assembly earlier this month. This can be seen as an important indication of continuity from the previous Conservative government to the current Liberal one, both with respect to Canada's vote at the UNGA and this country's strong, non-partisan support for Israel.

David H. Goldberg
Toronto

Question of the week

How should Canada's Jewish community welcome the arriving Syrian refugees?

Let us know in 150 words or less at cjninfo@gmail.com

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Chanukah

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RABBI·2·RABBI

Striving for light in a dark world

Putting Chanukah candles in our windows helps us share our values, which include helping others to see that the lives of all victims of terror have worth

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
TEMPLE EMANU-EL-BETH SHOLOM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Korobkin: Late last month, I travelled to Sharon, Mass., to pay a shivah call to the family of Ezra Schwartz, the 18-year old yeshiva student who was murdered by terrorists on his way to delivering snacks to IDF soldiers. His death hit hard for so many in our community who have sons and daughters studying in Israel. Ezra was all our sons and daughters.

His death was also marked by a moment of silence at a recent New England Patriots football game, since Ezra was a big fan.

In light of what happened in Paris, the world is starting to be more sympathetic to what Israelis regularly endure. I sometimes feel guilty about my schadenfreude, the satisfaction we sometimes get over others' misfortune. And yet it seems that unless the world is exposed to its own terror, it doesn't feel compassion for Israel's plight.

Rabbi Grushcow: I think that the terrible attacks in Paris reminded all of us that we live in an inherently unpredictable world and that every country can be touched by acts of terror. I lived in New York City before, during and after 9/11, and I remember experiencing a similar sense of vulnerability and fear, empathy and resolve.

What makes terror so terrifying is that it undermines daily life. No one should have to be afraid to go out to dinner, walk through their city, go to their house of worship or send their kids to school. Israelis have been living with this vulnerability for years. We have a lot to learn from their resilience. But I don't think we can do much about the world's double standard vis-a-vis Israel, except to keep bringing forward the human faces of those who live there.

What is more within our hands, it seems to me, is to support victims of terror wherever they are, to recognize that all of us are vulnerable and to live each day with courage and hope, to bring more light and drive out the dark. I think there's a holiday about that.

Rabbi Korobkin: Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik famously said that with the establishment of the State of Israel came the discovery to the world that Jewish blood is not *hefker*, or free (that, too, was part of the miracle of Chanukah). I think that he may have been overly optimistic, since nearly 70 years later, the world still views Jewish blood as *hefker*, or at least not as red as other victims of terror.

This makes me sad, not only because of the injustice and double standard, but because this makes it harder for our community to fully mourn without reservation when we read of tragedies anywhere else in the world. There will always be a part of me that thinks, "At least now they know what it feels like to be an Israeli."

So yes, we are very much a part of the rest of the world. But as long as the media turns its back on stabbings of Israelis, as long as the UN resolutions condemning Israel far outnumber those condemning any other country, it seems that the Jew will remain the perpetual outsider.

Rabbi Grushcow: Our ancestors, in their wisdom, taught that the chanukiyah must be placed in the window, where it can be seen by the outside world. This has at least two messages: first, confidence in showing who we are, and second, sharing our light with the world. In the face of darkness, our role is to add to the light.

Personally, I don't feel schadenfreude over others' misfortune. Rather, what seems most important to me, in the simplest terms, is to acknowledge that there is great darkness in the world and to do our best to spread light.

Of course, I want the world to understand that Jewish lives are precious, along with every human life. But I mourn for all the victims of terror without reservation. I fear for a world in which civilian life and civil society are endangered. And I pray for a world in which light prevails over darkness.

To strive for a world of light and peace will require a joint effort. Let our enemies try to differentiate between Jew and non-Jew, or to claim that some lives have less value than others. We have a different task. ■

How to reach us

Vol. XLV, No. 48 (2,224)*

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Editorial e-mail: cjnenfo@gmail.com
Advertising e-mail: adscjn@gmail.com **Website:** www.cjnews.com
Subscription inquiries: 416-932-5095
Toll Free: 1-866-849-0864 **Fax:** 416-932-2488
E-mail: cjncontact@gmail.com
Sales, National & Toronto Local: Canadian Primedia, 416-922-3605

Israeli Advertising Representative:
IMP, Tel: 02-625 2933, E-mail: info@impmedia.co.il

Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation
July 14, 2015

Postmaster: Please return 298s and changes of address to CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7
Postage Paid at Toronto Canada Post Publication Agreement #40010684
*Under current ownership

Canadian Heritage / Patrimoine canadien

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS

CJN

An independent community newspaper serving as a forum for diverse viewpoints

Publisher and Proprietor The Canadian Jewish News, a corporation without share capital. Head Office: 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord Ont. L4K 2L7

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From the Archives | Chanukah recital

FROM THE FREEDMAN FAMILY PHOTOS, NORTH BAY, ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

A Chanukah recital at Hebrew school in North Bay, Ont., in the mid-1960s. Pictured, front from left, are Elliot Rosenberg, an unidentified boy, Michael Back, Annette Metz, Mary Ellen Rosenberg, and three more unidentified children; middle from left, an unidentified girl, two boys, Helen Metz, a girl, Steve Gurevitch, and two boys; and back from left, Billy Metz, Kenny Herman, Howard Kizell, Shelly Freedman, Martin Brown and Steve Kizell.

SeeJN | Chanukiyah lighting

Sgt. Lawrence Sager of Toronto Police Services 32 Division celebrates the fourth annual lighting of the large menorah, by the station's front steps to mark the first night of Chanukah, with the help of Chabad Lubavitch. At left are Uptown Chabad Rabbi Moshe Steiner and 32 Division unit commander Supt. Selwyn Fernandes.

From Yoni's Desk

Eight questions for eight nights

The houses of Shamai and Hillel never agreed on much of anything, and Chanukah was no exception. Beit Shamai believed that the candles of the menorah should be lit in descending order – eight candles on the first night, seven on the second, and so on, until only a single flame remains on the eighth and final eve. Beit Hillel argued the opposite – that the lights should be illuminated in ascending order.

As is the case in virtually all disputes between the two schools of thought, Jewish law sides with Hillel, while acknowledging that the opinions of Shamai are not necessarily incorrect nor inferior. And as we celebrate Chanukah, it's important to remember Hillel and Shamai, and the core lesson of their famous disagreements: Judaism is built on a difficult questions and our ability to debate our central issues in a respectful manner.

With that in mind, here are eight Jewish issues worthy of debate this Chanukah.

1. The crisis in Jewish education is deepening, as costs spiral upward and families find it more and more difficult to afford tuition. Is there a solution that can save day schools? And what other forms might Jewish education take?

2. The Conservative and Reform movements are shrinking, while Orthodox Judaism is growing, but increasingly divided. What will it take for Conservative and Reform Judaism to reverse the trend? And is there any way to fix the rift in Orthodoxy?

3. The role of the rabbi is rapidly evolving. So is the Jewish web. As Jewish learning continues to expand online, how might the definition of "rabbi" change? What exactly is the role of the rabbi in an online age? And what role should the Internet play in Jewish learning?

4. As intermarriage rates continue to rise, what is the Jewish response? Is it better to welcome into the fold whomever we can? Or do we risk diluting Judaism to the point of no return?

5. At the heart of Diaspora Jewry is the need to balance support for Israel and the health of our own communities. Should we be focusing more on Israel? Or is the growth of Judaism in the Diaspora an equal imperative?

6. Black Jews, Jews with disabilities, Sephardi Jews, LGBTQ Jews – all have experienced difficulty when it comes to being welcomed into the larger Jewish community. What is being done to make marginalized Jews feel more at home? And how can these groups maintain their unique histories and ideals while also joining the larger Jewish community?

7. The Paris attacks have once again raised serious questions about the future of Europe's Jewish communities. Can they survive, or will many, or most, Jews ultimately leave for Israel and North America?

8. Jewish federations have long stood at the centre of our communities. In many cases, they form the bedrock of our Jewish lives and act as the central nervous system for Jewish organizations and institutions. But for a younger generation, the federation message often doesn't resonate. Can Jewish federations adapt? And how can young Jews contribute to a positive future for our federations?

Some food for thought while you enjoy your latkes.

Chag Samayach. ■ — YONI

ESSAY

A personal view of Israel's MDA

Dr. Jason Ohayon

The MDA Canada group with army medics.

"Are you coming with us?" were the initial words my pediatric colleague Dr. Shawna Granovsky asked me last May when inviting me to join the newly launched Magen David Adom (MDA) International Doctors Program.

A staunch supporter of Israel, Granovsky said her dream was to assist the MDA in a way that money could not: with her professional work as a physician, arm in arm with MDA paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMT), helping Israelis.

Organized by MDA Canada and directed by Daniel Amzallag, a group of 19 doctors from the Greater Toronto Area, Ottawa, Hamilton and Calgary set out on the first mission of its kind, bringing North American doctors to learn about first responders in Israel. When the trip was launched, there was relative calm in Israel. Sadly, all of us who remained committed to the trip realized that by then, there was yet again another conflict terrorizing our Israeli brethren. Nonetheless, with our families' blessings, we set off to learn and help in any way possible.

Our backgrounds varied, including pediatrics, family practice, obstetrics/gynecology, anesthesia, psychiatry and emergency medicine. Nineteen physicians came together for one week all with a common goal: to learn how MDA works and how to assist MDA in helping Israelis. Although all seasoned in our respective specialties, we approached this new opportunity as medical students exposed to their first shift in the ER, with both excitement and trepidation.

To assist us in "easing" into Israeli medical culture, MDA hosted our team for the initial Shabbat. There we met Ilan Klein, a senior MDA EMT, who shared with us what life is like for a first responder to emergencies, including terror.

Forever on call, Ilan answered a "101" call (aka 911) en route to the hotel, while in his Shabbat clothes, as the first call to the scene of a stabbing at gates of the Old City. We could see how every page for help would result in Ilan suddenly stopping his discussion and, in a split second, deciding if the call was near enough for him to assist. As we would quickly learn, Ilan's response was ingrained in all MDA personnel.

After Shabbat, our team was given a tour of how the MDA accesses the Old City of Jerusalem, using the "mule," a modified golf cart, designed to access narrow passageways in each of the four quarters. We were given some precious moments of prayer at the Kotel, the Western Wall, in preparation for our week ahead.

Our team met our EMT instructors, Rephael, 28, Eliezer, 26, and Noa, 22, who instructed us from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. During the week, our team reviewed protocols in advanced life support, learned how to navigate in the "*natan*," or mobile ICU ambulances. Our tours included the MDA call-in headquarters, Hadassah hospital at Mount Scopus, the Knesset and a medical army base in Binyamin, where we were exposed to a mock MCI, mass casualty incident, in co-ordination with army medical personnel.

Throughout our training time, our team learned two most extraordinary facts: that the majority of the labour force in MDA are volunteers, and that the 650-million NIS (about US $167.5-million) budget is not funded by the government. MDA relies on worldwide donations to assist with 25 per cent of its budget.

Our training culminated with a 24-hour period where each of us was assigned to one of three ambulance stations to assist in a shift covering emergencies in Jerusalem. The ER calls covered adult and pediatric emergencies including assisting with a home childbirth. When calls came in for Arab neighbourhoods, police or army would provide security, often to homes where Arabs were quite gracious about our arrival.

In my case, the head EMT, a devout Palestinian Muslim worked side by side and trust in trust with a devout Jewish EMT who hailed from one of the settlements. We all witnessed unique bonds between Jews of all backgrounds and between Jew and Arab.

Painful as it was to hear of stabbing attacks that would pull away our instructors during the middle of the day, we learned that being part of MDA gave us strength to run, strength to help and strength to show our love to Israelis, a strength that we could not attain in Canada.

We physicians were in awe of the professionalism and pride of all of the MDA staffers we encountered, from the volunteers at the call centres to the blood bank and EMT paramedics, who lived their days being both Israeli and members of the Magen David Adom.

Having received our "License to Save" card as MDA's International Doctors On Call for Israel, I turned to Granovsky at Ben-Gurion Airport and asked, "When are we coming back?" ■

Dr. Jason Ohayon is a consultant pediatrician-allergist in Hamilton, Ont.

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Finding the value in both Chanukah and Christmas

With intermarriage on the rise, interfaith families celebrate the best of both holidays

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

If nothing else, *The O.C.*, the popular 2003-07 American television show that featured the overblown dramas of hyper-privileged Orange County teens and their self-obsessed parents, can be credited with making a household name of "Chrismukkah" – the handy portmanteau that character Seth Cohen used to describe his interfaith family's fusing of Christmas and Chanukah.

With intermarriage on the rise, many Jews in Canada and the United States are partnered or raising children with spouses of Christian backgrounds. Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA's 2011 National Household Survey found that the intermarriage rate in this country is 25 per cent, about half the rate in the United States.

And with Christmas being the centrepiece of the Christian calendar in the West – even for the increasing number of North Americans who celebrate Jesus' birthday only culturally – many intermarried Jews find themselves in a quandary: should they embrace "Chrismukkah," observe Christmas and Chanukah separately, or focus on creating an exclusively Jewish home by just celebrating the Festival of Lights.

While every family's situation is different, it seems that many interfaith couples are finding ways to mark both holidays, but with the emphasis on each one's cultural value.

This lines up with findings from the Pew Research Center's 2013 study *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, which notes that younger generations of American Jews – 32 per cent, among Jewish millennials – often identify themselves as Jewish on the basis of ancestry, ethnicity or culture rather than religion. This matched the broader U.S. public's shift away from religious affiliation, which is particularly prevalent among those in the 18-to-29 age range.

As for "Chrismukkah," the Pew report found that about one-third of Jews surveyed said they'd had a Christmas tree in their home the year prior. Among those married to non-Jews, that number was 71 per cent.

Adam Brody played Seth Cohen in the show *The O.C.* and celebrated "Chrismukkah."

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Tyler Irving, 33, isn't Jewish, but his wife, who just gave birth to their first child, is.

"So far, I've found it pretty easy to celebrate both sets of holidays," he said. "We've been thinking about holidays as chances to reflect on culture, spend time with family and build strong bonds and putting less emphasis on the religious aspects," he said.

Because Christmas is when they visit Irving's parents, who live in the country, he expects that his own kids will view Christmas as a time to "be with Grandma and Grandpa," while Chanukah will be "the chance to go to spend time with Bubbie and Zaide."

Arielle Piat-Sauvé, 24, grew up in Quebec with a Jewish mother and a Catholic father.

"We always celebrated both holidays," she said. "We went to my dad's family for Christmas, though we did have a tree and did gifts at our own home. On Chanukah, we'd light the candles and do something with my [maternal] grandma and cousins. When I was younger, I'd get a gift for each night, but that wore off."

If the two holidays coincided, her family would first light the Chanukah candles and then go to her grandparents' for Christmas dinner.

She stressed that neither holiday celebration focused on their religious components, but tradition and family time.

"Often it's easier for families to add than subtract," said Rabbi Jordan Helfman of Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple, a Reform synagogue that has among its members quite a few interfaith couples.

Interfaith families with children enrolled in Holy Blossom's supplementary religious school are asked not to celebrate Christmas in their own homes, but going to a non-Jewish relative's place for Christmas is OK, Rabbi Helfman explained.

"My experience is it's not hard for children to make that distinction, especially when the parents are clear about, 'This is what we do in our house, and this is what Grandma does in her house.' Kids are smarter than we give them credit for," he said.

Rabbi Tina Grimberg of Congregation Darchei Noam, Toronto's Reconstructionist synagogue, said her congregation has a number of interfaith families, many of whom get involved in the shul's Chanukah festivities, or who light candles in their own homes.

"Do I go into people's homes and see Christmas trees? Not often at all. Do trees come up in [interfaith congregants'] homes on Dec. 24? Most likely not... though if people do celebrate both Christmas and Chanukah, they don't tell me," she said.

Just because a non-Jewish partner hasn't converted doesn't mean Christmas is central in their life, she emphasized.

And ultimately, when addressing interfaith families' practice of Judaism, there's a larger conversation at play.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

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Everyone experiences grief differently

Avrum Rosensweig

"They say time heals all wounds, but that presumes the source of the grief is finite." Cassandra Clare, *Clockwork Prince*

It is said, that when Sarah, the matriarch, heard that her husband, Abraham, was taking their son, Isaac, to be slaughtered – the Akedah – she herself perished out of grief. What would have caused her to do so? Why could she not have survived, despite the fact that her son was about to die?

Grief is a lonely matter. It is a condition from within that causes a person to feel great loneliness, to stare at his or her dreams, to go to a place without hope. "If my son, Isaac, is to die today," perhaps Sarah said, "then I cannot live anymore because he is the reason I breathe. His dreaming is my dream."

And is it not possible that Sarah added, "I cannot bear the pain I will feel because of my boy's demise, and while time might heal all, I would prefer the hands of my internal clock to slow and then stop, for life is not worthwhile without the love of his gaze"?

Why is it that Sarah did not outlast her grief, while others do so?

Could it be that when she heard of the Akedah, grief set in, in the worst way possible? She believed her son was gone, and her maternal love was now without a subject. For she loved Isaac with her entire being.

Abraham, her soulmate, was the executioner, and her relationship with him was beyond repair. How could she show affection to the man who consciously drew a knife from his scabbard to murder their progeny – a boy who had not arrived easily?

And worst of all, God was cruel. Her faith in God was jaded. How might she pray to the King of Kings, the Father of all creation, when part of His plan was to take back her son, Isaac, a child she never believed could be born from her aged womb?

> *Sarah's sorrow was great. She grieved to death.*

So Sarah's sorrow was great. She grieved to death. All she wanted was gone. Nothing she cherished remained. And she died. Her heart stopped. And she was buried in Hebron, a grieving soul. Nothing else.

I have seen grief countless times in my lifetime, as you have. The grieving daughter. The grieving son. The grieving father. The grieving mother. The grieving grandparents. The grieving friend. The grieving community. A grieving nation.

Its colour – grief, that is – is a sort of grey, on a monochromatic palette of feelings mixed with a fluid we call tears. He who grieves sits before you, at arm's length, yet his presence is adrift, miles beyond the stratosphere, unable to join those experiencing life with joy.

It is true that some, like Sarah, will not outlive their grief, for it is all-encompassing and blocks the way so that the sad one cannot move. And then there are others, who experience loss on a level that seems impossible to overcome – like the concentration camp survivor whose entire family was wiped out. Yet, they do.

Grief is grief. The griever is not to be judged or second-guessed. The level of pain one experiences through grief is one's own, not at all belonging to anyone else. Yet, there is one thing we can wonder about. Why did God make grieving so harsh?

"The darker the night, the brighter the stars, the deeper the grief, the closer is God!" Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment.* ■

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A small-town boy comes to the big city

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz

I just moved to New York City from Cote St. Luc, a suburban village that's the closest thing to a shtetl anywhere in Canada. So everyone's been asking me the same question: what's life like in the big city?

It's a good question. When I grew up in Monsey, N.Y., it was a small town, a place where everyone looked out for each other. And like any small-town boy, I still crave that unique sense of camaraderie. Rod Dreher features this small town spirit in his memoir *The Little Way of Ruthie Leming*. Dreher left his small town in Louisiana as a teenager. After years of city life, he returns when his younger sister is diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. Dreher was so impressed by the communal support given to his sister that he decided to move back to Louisiana. There's simply no community like a small-town community.

Big cities are very different. Ferdinand Tonnies, in his classic work *Community and Society*, describes the city as dramatically different than small towns: it is built around advancing individual ambition rather than building communal cohesiveness, and as a consequence, is rather cold and impersonal. And to the minds of many, big cities should be avoided. Thomas Jefferson once remarked: "I view great cities as pestilential to the morals, the health and the liberties of man."

So what happens when a small-town boy like me moves to the big city?

Actually, this question is relevant to every Jew, wherever we live, because Jews are fundamentally small-town folk. The Book of Genesis offers an extended critique of big cities. The plans of the first city builders are frustrated by God, and there is marked contrast between the hospitable small-town ways of Abraham and the big-town coldness of Sodom and Egypt.

Yet despite the failures of cities and empires, the Torah does not demand that the Jews remain tent-dwelling nomads. In fact, it encourages us to build a cosmopolitan state with well-developed institutions.

> *Jews are fundamentally small-town folk.*

So what happens when small-town Jews build a big city? We bring the small town with us. Maimonides teaches that despite the biblical obligation to love one's neighbour, the rabbis added additional obligations to visit the sick, bury the dead, comfort the bereaved, and marry off brides. The point of these additional obligations is that we must do more than love our neighbour. We are obliged to extend beyond our immediate social circle and build community. It is not enough to treat those we know with kindness. We must create an embracing community that cares for all of the sick, each mourner and every bride. And the magic of the Jewish tradition is that even when we build large cosmopolitan societies, we ensure that within them beats the heart of a small-town community.

Israel is an excellent example of this unique small-town ethos. In 2014, Sean Carmeli, a lone soldier from Texas, fell in battle. There was virtually no one to attend the funeral. But after a worried friend posted a Facebook message about it, news spread like wildfire, and in the end, more than 20,000 people attended. This outpouring of kindness could only happen in Israel, where a large country still carries the warmth of a small town.

Now that I've arrived in New York City, I'm learning that in this bustling metropolis, there's a small town hiding underneath. In my first Shabbat at my new synagogue, we honoured the outgoing chair of its bikur cholim committee. This dedicated group visits patients at Sloan Kettering every Shabbat. Here in the middle of Manhattan is a team of volunteers visiting the sick, making this community, like every Jewish community, feel like one big small town.

So what's it like living in the big city? To tell you the truth, as a small-town boy, I feel right at home. ■

Why I feel like wailing at the Kotel

Rabbi Dow Marmur

The Palestinian argument that the reason for the current wave of terrorism in Israel is the result of Jewish provocations on the Temple Mount is spurious. But the preoccupation with the site of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem among Orthodox extremists at one end of the spectrum – they want to rebuild it – and ultra-nationalist zealots at the other – they want to place an Israeli flag on the site – should concern us all.

Both negate the truth articulated by the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, one of the sages of our time, that Judaism has no holy places, only holy events. We sanctify time by celebrating Sabbaths and Festivals, not space by venerating sacred sites.

Writing in the *Jerusalem Post* earlier this year, Amotz Asa-El observed that "the Temple inspired the uniquely Jewish delusion that loyalty to a shrine can replace a nation's loyalty to its land." This delusion tempts today's fanatics to break Israeli law that, by international agreement, explicitly forbids Jews to pray on the Temple Mount.

But even law-abiding citizens and visitors from abroad seem to be obsessed with the Temple. That's probably why they flock to what's left of one of its outer walls, the Kotel, the ancient symbol of pious devotion. Since the Israeli victory in the 1967 war, it has also become a powerful reminder of Jewish sovereignty. What was once for some the Wailing Wall has become for all the Western Wall.

I always think of Rabbi Heschel's dictum on the few occasions I visit there. Sometimes I also remember another sage, the staunchly Orthodox Yeshayahu Leibowitz. When the plaza was built at the site to accommodate visitors he named it provocatively the "Dis-Kotel." He considered it showbiz, not Judaism. For others it's politics.

That Orthodox Jews, who include prayers for the restoration of the Temple in their daily liturgy, and non-religious Israelis, who remember the spectacular capture of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967, should venerate the site is understandable. But why Reform Jews should be equally committed to it is puzzling.

Some are active members of the Women of the Wall, the group that has had a lot of publicity over the years. It marks every Rosh Chodesh with a service in the women's enclosure of the Wall that usually attracts much publicity and occasionally leads to unseemly police intervention.

The politics of the group is laudable, as it seeks to break the monopoly of male-dominated Orthodoxy. I can see why Orthodox women, who understandably see themselves as second-class Jews in their traditional services, should want full equality, including reading from the Torah, not just listening when men chant it. Belonging to Women of the Wall is one of their ways of protest.

But why do Reform Jews flock to the site to pray at a segregated service? Reform worship has removed the prayers that ask God to restore the ancient Temple. And services that separate women and men are out of bounds in Reform congregations. At the Wall, however, political expediency seems to have replaced religious integrity.

As a compromise for those who care about gender equality, the Jewish Agency, which is focused on the Diaspora, where Reform and Conservative Jews dominate, has helped secure space nearby for egalitarian services. This may be acceptable to those who oppose separation between women and men, but it remains problematic for disciples of Rabbi Heschel and Leibowitz.

Now we hear that even this arrangement may not last. The ultra-nationalist organization Elad, which, over the years, has systematically encroached on Palestinian property in the area, has been given control over an archeological site nearby, which may make it impossible for the egalitarian services to continue. What the government gives with one hand its supporters seem to take away with the other.

Some may bewail the situation. As for me, I feel more like wailing when I watch Reform Jews compromise their religious principles for the sake of political gains. ■

A mixed-marriage Christmas

Michael Coren

Does nostalgia tint our vision and memory with warmth and joy? Perhaps. But try as I might, I cannot remember anything but happiness growing up in the 1960s in Britain with a Jewish dad and a non-Jewish mother when Christmas came around.

I was raised without any religion, but with a certain if limited Jewish cultural identity. I was always far more British than Jewish and, in a way, by implication more Anglican than Jewish. We had a mezuzah on the door and, come December, a Christmas tree in the front room. Mind you, it was only a medium-sized tree, and we brought it down from the attic every year, unfolded its cheap, tinsel branches and hung ornaments on it. No crosses, no Jesus, no crèche, no Virgin Mary. That would be have been inconceivable, even by immaculate standards.

I remember the Salvation Army coming to the door one year and singing carols. Suddenly they stopped, and we heard a man explaining to his uniformed choir that it might be rude to sing about Jesus outside a house where, as he had noticed from the mezuzah, a Jewish family lived. It was so delicately and sensitively put. Not political correctness, but Christian charity. My dad ran to the door, asked them to please continue singing, and then put as much money as he could in their collection tin.

My parents would no more have gone to church than to synagogue, at least at any time that didn't involve a wedding or a funeral. Yet dad never worked Yom Kippur. He was a London cab driver at a time when around one-third of all of the black cabs in the city were driven by Jewish men. If he'd been seen working by non-Jewish cabbies on the Day of Atonement, they would have been shocked and told their Jewish friends when they returned to work.

The only other time dad didn't work was Christmas Day, which was always to be spent with the family. So Phil Coren worked until 2 a.m. on Christmas Eve to try to make up for the money he lost by not working the following day. It wasn't because he was mean with money – far from it – but because he supported a family of four on his single income, and we were not wealthy by any means. Thank God for public education, the National Health Service and British social democracy.

> *My parents would no more have gone to church than to synagogue, at least at any time that didn't involve a wedding or funeral.*

What has always hurt me is that I didn't realize the reality of it all. I would wake up at seven in the morning on Christmas Day, see the sack of presents at the end of my bed and rush to my parents' bedroom screaming, "He's been, he's been!"

I could never understand why my dad seemed so tired, so lacking in interest. The poor man had had five hours sleep after a 16-hour working day so as to buy what "He" who had "been" had left me. I wish Dad was here now, so I could tell him that I was so, so grateful to him for it.

Christmas Day was Frosty the Snowman and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer on television – no videos then – followed by a big lunch and then family visits in the evening. Mum's parents gave me more gifts, Dad's parents didn't – they were the children of east European immigrants and Christmas to them was still something alien. I should have been more understanding of all that, but, truth be told, I resented them for it.

I loved the carols, I loved the sense of goodwill to all, I loved the vague ideas I had of the Christmas story of magic made flesh. I loved the whole thing. But most of all, I loved my mixed marriage parents, who showed me the joy of Christmas. ■

Michael Coren is an author and broadcaster. He can be reached at mcoren@sympatico.ca.

News

Congregations prepare to welcome Syrian refugees

PAUL LUNGEN
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As a wave of Syrian refugees begins to enter Canada, two Jewish groups – one in the GTA and another in Ottawa – are waiting for word that their sponsored families will be arriving in Canada soon.

The two refugee families could arrive by the end of December. All the paperwork has been completed and all that remains is for the final travel arrangements to be concluded, said Lia Kisel, language and settlement director of Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Toronto (JIAS).

"We believe that because it was put together so fast, they may be coming very soon," she said.

JIAS is a sponsorship agreement holder (SAH), permitting it to facilitate immigration to Canada. It is operating in co-operation with 25 Jewish groups, many associated with Toronto-area synagogues, to sponsor refugee families. Each group is expected to raise at least $27,600 for a family of four, while many of the sponsoring groups are also collecting furniture, clothes and lodging, while volunteering services such as medical and dental care for the expected arrivals.

Kisel declined to reveal which groups are expected to be first in line to receive Syrian refugees, but the members of several Toronto-area synagogues have been working to prepare for the arrival of their sponsored families.

In Oakville, Shaarei-Beth El Congregation has raised $5,000 as its share of the sponsorship fee, in a joint effort with a local church and a Muslim group associated with the ISNA Mosque.

"We understand that our refugee family has been approved. Now we wait to hear the exact arrival date likely by the end of December. Then we go to the airport to pick them up," said Rabbi Stephen Wise.

"In the meantime, ACT, the partnership with the Muslim and Christian communities, together have several committees working hard – a housing committee finding an apartment, a food committee collecting halal goods, a clothing committee organizing clothing drives, a furniture committee, a health committee to help them with getting OHIP cards and doctor and dentists and possible mental health, and a transportation committee to help them with carpools and navigating the GO bus system. We are ready when they get here," he said.

As Chanukah approached, the congregation was planning to make this year's celebration even more meaningful.

"As part of our Chanukah celebration, we are doing the food drive as a way for our youth to give gifts instead of receiving gifts each day. The food drive culminates in a communal candlelighting on Friday night, Dec. 11, when the mayor, the town council, the regional chair and leaders of the interfaith community will join me on the bimah to light the lights of freedom."

Members of Congregation Darchei Noam were perhaps the first to seek out a Syrian family to sponsor. Tema Smith, manager of communications for the synagogue, said "we're not sure yet when our family is arriving."

Rabbi Stephen Wise

As they wait, synagogue members active in the project are now "collecting furniture, clothing from our members in as-good-as-new condition so they can be set up in comfort," she said.

Synagogue volunteers are also prepared to find an apartment for the family to live in. In addition to volunteers from the synagogue, other members of the Jewish community have pledged financial support and provided other materials to help settle the new arrivals.

Holy Blossom Temple is planning to sponsor two Syrian families. According to synagogue spokesperson Jacqueline Friedland, the family is currently in Turkey and is not expected to arrive until late spring.

"There are a large number of volunteers who have begun to collect clothing, books, household items, furniture. Others have stepped forward to volunteer as tutors, to provide a wide variety of health care services, to potentially assist with employment, and possibly housing," she said.

"The family we are sponsoring have some relatives already in Toronto. We will co-ordinate with them about how best to welcome the family and provide ongoing support as they adapt to life in Canada.

"We are eager to welcome new families to Canada and help make their transition as easy as possible, recognizing the difficult circumstances that they have faced over the recent past," she added.

Abby Robins at City Shul said the synagogue's membership has risen to the challenge of raising money and preparing the ground for a refugee family, once they arrive in Canada.

When that is, "I don't know," said Robins.

In the meantime, the members have volunteered material goods and are prepared to help the new arrivals set up with OHIP, find doctors, take them to appointments and help in other ways to acclimatize them to Canada. Services have already been volunteered from a pediatrician and a psychologist.

"Refugees hit home for Jews. We're doing what people didn't do for us," she said.

Alla Mazor, a settlement worker at Jewish Family Services in Ottawa, said the agency is facilitating two refugee family sponsorships by a number of Ottawa residents. As for when they might expect the family, "it could be soon, but we don't know how soon." ■

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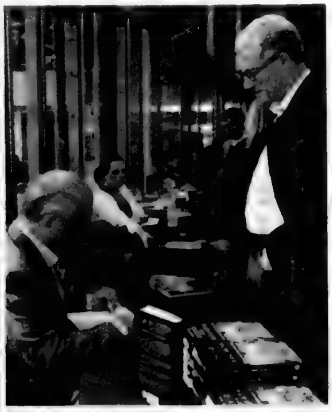

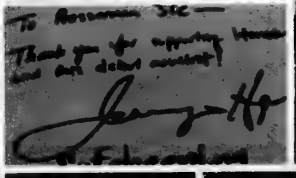

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Vancouver Jews rally to help Syrian refugees

LAUREN KRAMER
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Vancouver's Jewish community has rallied to the cause of the Syrian refugees. Fundraising efforts are well underway to bring refugee families to British Columbia in early 2016.

The most public face of the Jewish fundraising efforts has been Rabbi Dan Moskovitz of Temple Sholom, the city's largest synagogue with 720 member households. He was galvanized into action by the image of Alan Kurdi's drowned body on the beach, and delivered a powerful sermon during Yom Kippur.

"We would all save the child, because children are all innocent. But to love the stranger you have to take the parents too, you have to love the Syrians who were taught to fear and hate Israel, to fear and hate… Jews. In these [refugee] numbers the world is dealing with, too many innocents will die while we carefully screen for the next Bin Laden. I want to ask you to save a life, the life of a stranger – because we were once strangers in the land, because we are human beings and that is the only similarity that we really need."

Rabbi Dan Moskovitz

Within a few days of that sermon, the congregation had raised $40,000, enough to sponsor one Syrian refugee family's resettlement in British Columbia. It's now fundraising for another $40,000 to sponsor a second family and is collaborating with the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver (JFGV), the Anglican Archdiocese and Mosaic, an immigrant service organization in Vancouver.

Rabbi Moskovitz's efforts attracted national press coverage that generated more donations and letters of support from around the world, many from the Muslim community. Support from his congregants for the refugee initiative has been "mostly unanimous," he said.

"A handful of congregants have expressed concern that we're importing people who might hate us, and I met with them. They want us to be intentional in how we do this, but everyone wanted to help."

Rabbi Moskovitz said the congregation had opted to be "agnostic" in terms of the religious identities of the families it has chosen to sponsor. Both are Kurdish families: one with two children ages five and three whose parents are a medical doctor and a lab technician, and the other a newly wedded couple, ages 18 and 20.

"We're completely responsible for them financially for the first year – for meeting them at the airport, arranging housing, food and clothing," he said. Mosaic will take care of language training, job training and cultural integration. Both sponsorships involve family reunification and both families already have family in Vancouver.

"There's a rabbinic imperative from our tradition to try to unify a family, so we felt a Jewish obligation to work towards that," he said.

As chair of the Canadian Council of Reform Rabbis, Moskovitz added that every sizable Reform congregation in Canada – approximately 20 – is sponsoring refugee families.

"We've also just created a partnership between Reform congregations in Canada and the U.S. It will give the 950 American Reform congregations an opportunity to co-sponsor refugee families with us and offer material support, care packages and organizational assistance."

Congregation Or Shalom, Vancouver's Reconstructionist synagogue, also created a Syrian refugee initiative just before Rosh Hashanah, with the goal of sponsoring three refugee families. To date it has raised $80,000 and has been holding events to raise an additional $40,000. "We trust that the government has a good screening process," said Natalie Grunberg, who is helping spearhead the initiative.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

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WISHING YOU A HAPPY & HEALTHY CHANUKAH

A Syrian refugee and her child rest in Kos, Greece. SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

"We understand that these refugees are people just like us who need to find a safe place. As Jews, that really resonates with us, so we've not had too many concerns from members of our community and any concern people have is usually out of ignorance."

In October, the JFGV sent a $10,000 donation from its emergency fund to the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) to support the welfare needs of Syrian women and children refugees, and to provide psychological support to front-line staff. Federation has opted to work as an intermediary with the Anglican diocese, Mosaic and Jewish community partners including synagogues, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and Jewish Family Service Agency.

At Mosaic, Mustafa Ahmad, a Kurdish settlement worker who left Syria for Canada in 1990, is helping the Jewish community select the families for sponsorship.

> *We understand that these refugees are people just like us who need to find a safe place.*

"In screening potential families, I'm trying to make sure they're not anti-religion and specifically not anti-Semitic," he said. His process involves interviewing Vancouver-based relatives of those families to ensure they are aware that the sponsorship is by the Jewish community. "If they're from the Kurdish community, I'm from the same area and I know the values, traditions and customs over there," he added.

Congregation Schara Tzedeck in Vancouver has opted to aid the refugee crisis by raising money for the JDC to help refugees on the ground. "We're also raising money for the Rambam Hospital in Israel which provides medical treatment to victims of war, through Canadian Friends of Rambam Hospital," Rabbi Andrew Rosenblatt said.

At Richmond, B.C.'s Beth Israel Synagogue, Rabbi Howard Siegel said his board was still discussing how they would help the Syrian refugees, but said there was strong interest from many members in providing assistance.

"We want to see what's going to happen here before committing our resources, before determining where we can get the most bang for our buck. The elephant in the room here is what is going to be the role of the Muslim community in B.C.? How involved will they be in this refugee effort?"

According to Daud Ismail, president of the B.C. Muslim Association, the Muslim community, which numbers between 50,000 and 80,000, is actively gathering support. The BCMA has applied to be a Sponsorship Agreement Holder, documentation that will allow it to sponsor families. In the last four to six weeks the community has raised $50,000 and hopes to raise another $300,000 in December to sponsor up to five refugee families. It has also set aside warehouse space for storage of donated furniture and household items.

"There are up to 25 Muslim organizations working with us and they're collecting money independently, too," Ismail said. "We don't care if we sponsor Muslim or Christian refugees – we're going to help as many refugees as possible." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 10, 2015

Paul Penna only Jewish day school to sponsor refugees

SHERI SHEFA
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When Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School parent Angus Grant reached out to his school community to raise funds to sponsor a Syrian family of refugees, he was overwhelmed by the response.

"It became very clear, very quickly that there was this very strong desire to do something about the situation and so the response was pretty overwhelming... Within about two weeks, or less than that, we raised about $34,000," Grant said.

He said that as an immigration refugee lawyer, he understood that the refugee crisis in the Middle East was one of "epic proportions and one that really is the biggest since the Second World War, and the responses to it were happening kind of slowly.

"It was something that began percolating in my mind last year and this year, as news of the situation became more and more grave, I approached our principal, Dan Goldberg, and he was more than receptive to the idea and really saw it as fitting in with the school's commitment to social justice, with its commitment to really putting tikkun olam into practice with the school."

With the support of the school's board of directors, he reached out to the Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS), which had been working with other Jewish organizations on a response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

Jodi Block, a community integration specialist with JIAS, said while there are a number of Jewish congregations in Toronto that have initiated the sponsorship of Syrian refugees, Paul Penna is the only Jewish day school in Toronto to do so.

Grant said the school community raised the funds, which were collected by JIAS. The agency is providing logistical support and handling the legal side of the process.

He said the amount you raise determines the size of the family you can sponsor.

"It's based on a formula that the government puts in place and how much support the people will need to provide for their basic needs in the first year after they arrive. That's what the money covers. For a family of four, it's about $27,000 and change, for a family of five, it is about $29,000 and change. So our goal was to sponsor a family of five and to have money over and above that to cover some of the costs that are not covered by the process."

Grant said that although the goal was to sponsor a family of five, JIAS identified a particular family it wanted to pair the school with. "I received an email from them saying... 'There was a family that had been a family of five but the father and principal provider to the family had been killed in a bomb that also destroyed their house.' They left and are in Turkey now. It's a mother and twins who are five and an older child who is seven... That is the family that we are in the process of helping."

Paul Penna students count the money they raised to sponsor a Syrian refugee family.

He said one of the most "touching" aspects of the fundraising initiative was the fact students also took it upon themselves to get involved. "It's an SK to Grade 6 school, so these aren't big kids, but they really kind of absorbed the gravity of the situation, so through their student council, they did their own fundraising drive and a spare change drive, and in just over a week, they raised $1,000."

Grant said he didn't encounter members of the school community who opposed the initiative based on fear terrorists might come to Canada under the guise of being refugees. "Even after the whole Paris situation... I think there was a recognition that millions of regular, ordinary civilians are being displaced in the civil war and are... the much more immediate victims of terrorism."

He said the funds have been raised and the family has been identified, but he doesn't expect them to arrive in Toronto until spring. "The government really is doing everything they can to expedite the process. We assume once we get the paperwork in, that they will process it very quickly and then it depends on how quickly they can get exit visas from Turkey," he said.

Grant said the school's involvement provided a valuable lesson to parents and students about their role as global citizens and working to repair the world.

"Displacement, persecution, family separation – these are concepts that Jews intrinsically understand and so I think that's also part of the reason why the response to this situation has been so forthcoming." ■

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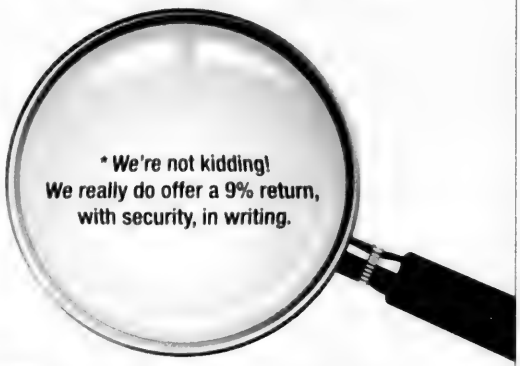

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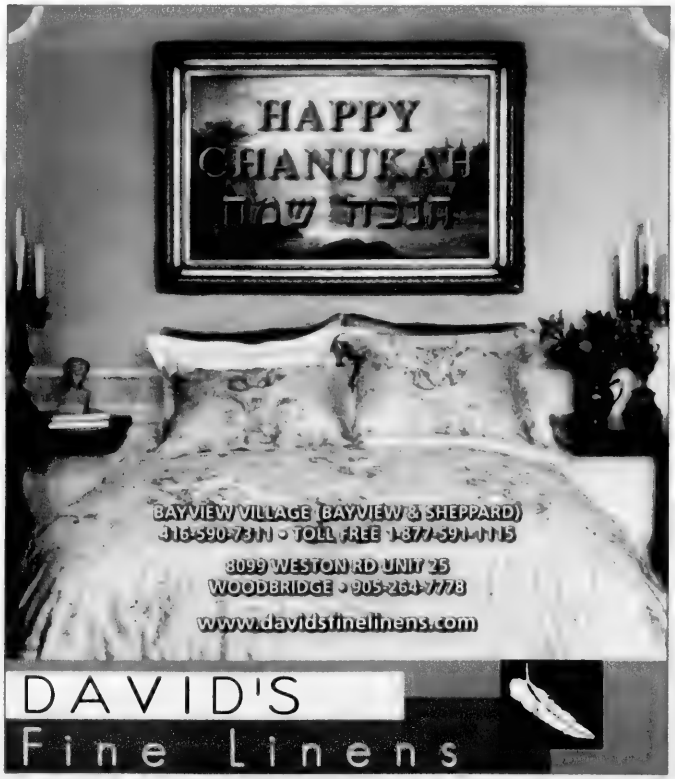

They'll always have Paris: PMs' meeting called warm

PAUL LUNGEN
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The Canada-Israel relationship appears to have gotten off to a good start under the new Liberal government following a meeting last week between the prime ministers of the two countries.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met in Paris while attending the UN conference on climate change, and by all accounts, things went well. The public statements were positive, the meeting was described as warm, and in somewhat of a throwback to the days when Kremlinologists used any clue to determine the state of affairs in Moscow, Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak noticed that Benjamin Netanyahu wore a red tie to the meeting, while Justin Trudeau wore a blue one.

Of course, that little factoid – suggesting very subtle diplomatic signals – was a small part of a broader analysis of the meeting that Barak provided *The CJN*, which was upbeat and positive.

The meeting, which lasted only about half an hour, was friendly, and it appeared there was good chemistry between the leaders. Barak pronounced himself pleased with its outcome. "This was a good meeting. People are happy," he said. "For us diplomats, it was a good signal for us to develop our relationship."

The two leaders discussed regional issues and continued commercial co-operation on a variety of fronts, and Netanyahu invited Trudeau to visit Israel, Barak said.

Trudeau later said it would be his "pleasure" to visit. "We have many issues to talk about, to discuss, but also many issues to collaborate on. And I look forward to continuing the strong friendship that Canada has shown towards Israel for decades and will continue in ongoing times," Trudeau added.

Even before Paris, it appeared the Trudeau government was intent on retaining close relations with Israel. "We are getting a lot of positive signals," Barak said.

The ambassador noted Trudeau's vocal opposition to the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement, as well as the intention to maintain "cyber co-operation" and various commercial endeavours. Canada's recent UN votes on issues concerning Israel were also seen in a positive light, Barak said.

Observers of the relationship could also point to other signals that ties will remain warm and supportive. They include the description of Israel by Trudeau and Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion as an "ally," not just a friend, as well as Trudeau's comments criticizing an EU decision to label products originating from the West Bank.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Paris. AMOS BEN GERSHOM/GPO PHOTO

University of Toronto professor Nelson Wiseman isn't surprised that relations continue to remain good between the two countries. Canadian policy under the Harper government was consistent with that of the previous Liberal government, other than at a rhetorical level. Under the Tories, Canadian policies changed only at the edges, in terms of funding certain Palestinian groups, he said.

Looking ahead, "I don't think things will change much, except the Liberals will give more space to the Palestinians," which could translate into more contact with Palestinian leadership in the West Bank, he said.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) is pleased with the way the Canada-Israel relationship has unfolded under Trudeau. "The [Paris] meeting was warm. Mr. Trudeau responded affirmatively to the invitation to come on an official visit to Israel," said CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel.

Trudeau acknowledged that the relationship between the two countries was deep and warm, which Fogel called, "an implicit reference to the previous government.

"We were very pleased with the tone and the substance of the meeting, and gratified with the signals the government is sending regarding the stability of the relationship and the desire to see it grow," Fogel added.

"I am delighted that Trudeau and Netanyahu met personally. It is always better to reinforce in person what has been said in the press about policy and platform. It's important for our Jewish community here in Canada to see, as well as all citizens of Israel," said Karen Mock, a spokesperson for JSpaceCanada.

"They can rely on Canada to support Israel, its right to exist and its right to safety and security. With that commitment, I look forward to Canada's more active and more effective role in a peace process, in promoting Canada-Israel relations through honest discussions of human and civil rights, and in more effective negotiations at UN than we have seen in the last several years," she added. ■

Canada votes against UN motion on glorifying Nazism

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Canada has voted against, and Israel for, a United Nations resolution against glorifying Nazism that is being perceived as part of a Russian campaign to smear its neighbours.

The resolution, which passed in the UN's Third Committee Nov. 19 and now heads to the General Assembly, is part of Russia's "rhetorical war against Ukraine and the Baltic Republics in which all non-Russian nationalism is discredited as being fascist and akin to the Nazi collaborators of the World War II era," according to Hillel Neuer, executive director of the Geneva-based group UN Watch.

Canada was one of just four countries to vote against the measure, which called on nations to fight the "glorification of Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."

It also encourages states to take legislative and educational measures "to put an end to all forms of Holocaust denial" and welcomes the preservation of former Nazi death and labour camps.

As well, the resolution recognizes "with deep concern the alarming increase in instances of discrimination, intolerance and extremist violence motivated by anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and Christianophobia and prejudices against persons of other religions and beliefs."

It is common for "non-democracies to misuse the language of human rights to promote political agendas, and that's what Russia is overtly doing here," Neuer told *The CJN* via email.

Israel voted for the resolution, as it did a year ago, because the country "cannot vote anything but 'yes' to a resolution against Nazism, as it also includes a condemnation of anti-Semitism," said Eitan Weiss of Israel's embassy in Ottawa.

Voting no were Palau, the United States, Ukraine and Canada, which voted against it last year as well, as did the United States and Ukraine.

The resolution was brought forward by Russia and submitted by 41 countries, including China, Cuba, Sudan, Myanmar, Pakistan and 17 African nations, including Nigeria. It passed with 126 yes votes and 53 abstentions, which came from European Union countries and Japan.

It is "no surprise" that the co-sponsors of the Russian text are almost all non-democracies and that western countries mostly abstained, Neuer observed.

"These kinds of texts, which include both legitimate and distorted language,

> *[Countries face] dilemma of looking bad no matter how they vote*

can present countries with the dilemma of looking bad no matter how they vote," he added.

The U.S. delegate agreed the resolution was politicized and expressed concern that Russia was using it to carry out a political attack against its neighbours.

Several times, the document references the controversial 2001 World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban, South Africa, which was widely criticized for its strident anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist language. It "reaffirms the relevant provisions of the Durban Declaration and of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference."

The United States and Israel withdrew from the first Durban conference in 2001 citing its anti-Semitic tone.

Canada was one of nine countries to boycott the 2009 conference. At the time, Ottawa said the decision was made because of the "open and divisive expressions of intolerance and anti-Semitism" at the 2001 gathering.

In 2011, Canada said it would not participate in the "charade" of a 10th anniversary commemoration of the Durban "hate fest."

In a statement to *The CJN*, spokesperson Tania Assaly of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada said this country is "strongly opposed to the glorification of Nazism and all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. We are deeply concerned by the rise of neo-Nazism in many parts of the world, and are committed to eliminating racism and discrimination, in all their forms."

However, "the resolution put forward at the United Nations General Assembly on the glorification of Nazism regrettably includes references which are counterproductive to this goal and seek to limit freedom of expression, assembly and opinion. Canada did not, therefore, vote in favour of the resolution."

Canada was blunter a year ago, when it explained that it had not supported the same resolution because it referred to the "highly politicized and anti-Semitic outcomes" of the 2001 Durban conference.

Explaining his vote this year, the delegate from Ukraine said his country had been among those that had suffered the most during World War II, but that the text had nothing to do with fighting Nazism, neo-Nazism and other forms of intolerance. ■

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Broadcaster's new Mideast coverage rules welcomed

JANICE ARNOLD
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Michel Cormier

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) is claiming a significant victory in its long-running dispute with Radio-Canada over its Middle East coverage.

The advocacy group hails new guidelines to journalists covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the French-language broadcaster, issued by Montreal bureau chief Michel Cormier.

The guidelines are aimed at ensuring balance and objectivity.

"Our role is to report the facts and present the context in which they happen, regardless of the emotion that the subject can give rise to," the guidelines state.

Since 2007, CIJA has filed numerous complaints with Radio-Canada over what it views as reporting that is inaccurate or biased against Israel. The coverage of the deadly wave in terrorism by Palestinians over the past two months has prompted a series of objections from CIJA to the network's ombudsman, Pierre Tourangeau.

Cormier says that the conflict is "often controversial and always delicate," and cautions journalists that coverage is "scrutinized under a magnifying glass by certain interest groups for the least error of fact or interpretation."

Cormier notes the many complaints the ombudsman has received on this subject over the years, and though only a "tiny minority" have been upheld by the ombudsman, "nevertheless, we can and must take all appropriate measures to reduce the number."

Cormier is a veteran Radio-Canada and CBC journalist who served as foreign correspondent in Beijing, Moscow and Paris. He assumed his present post in 2012.

He acknowledges that determining the facts is especially difficult in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, because, even within the parties, there is disagreement on what they are. Therefore, he counsels that journalists take the time to "attribute each fact and its interpretation to the group that defends it."

They should also bear in mind the conflict's long history, with its periods of discord and relative calm, he said, and the current geopolitical reality.

"The more we remember the historic context of the events that we cover, the more we give our public points of reference to better understand the sense."

He counsels against "synthesizing" a single Palestinian and a single Israeli position in an attempt to make a complex situation more comprehensible, as a wide diversity exists among each people.

Digital media offer a way of providing more background to news stories, he suggests.

However, Cormier advises "the greatest discretion" in the use of social media. "It takes one comment to damage the credibility of our whole coverage."

The guidelines also address the selection and identification of in-studio guests. Cormier cites the case of Rachid Antonius, a Université du Québec à Montréal sociology professor and frequent commentator on the Middle East in the media – the subject of one of CIJA's more recent complaints.

Cormier says he does not share the opinion that Antonius is not qualified to speak on the subject, but the host or journalist should situate his and other guests' interest in the debate.

Harder to correct is the "tone" of coverage, which CIJA has cited, specifically an "aggressive tone" used in interviews by two hosts with the Israeli consul general on the Israeli military operation in Gaza in 2014, which resulted in hundreds of mainly civilian deaths.

"Even if the complaints against our two hosts were not upheld [by the ombudsman], it is important to show restraint in this type of situation. That does not mean showing indifference to the victims of a drama. But it is not up to we journalists, to get indignant about a situation, as terrible as it is…

"Our audience will decide the emotion that they feel toward a situation. We are not to suggest theirs by our own."

David Ouellette, CIJA Quebec's associate public affairs director, hailed the establishing of the guidelines as "huge" and, by implication, "really damning.

"Radio-Canada has systematically failed to uphold its own journalistic norms. It is clear in our minds they have not been doing their job thoroughly. They are acknowledging a systemic problem in reporting on Israel," he said.

In CIJA's opinion, Radio-Canada journalists have shown a "clear bias" against Israel. Among young reporters, Ouellette attributes much of that to "ignorance." More worrisome is the network's high-profile seasoned journalists who "wear their bias on their sleeves."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Interfaith families respect both traditions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

"It's about how to live life in a Jewish context when you have deep roots in another reality. It's not about, 'I'm Jewish because I don't celebrate Christmas.' It's 'How many Jewish things do I do…do I do Shabbat, go to synagogue, have a seder, do mitzvot, say *Shema* in the morning?'" she said. "Some people will still have a tree, because it honours their grandma, while others feel they have enough of a rich Jewish life that they no longer need it," she said.

Rabbi Jillian Cameron is director of the Boston chapter of InterfaithFamily, a U.S. organization that supports interfaith couples exploring Jewish life. It provides families with educational materials and connections to inclusive organizations, programs and local clergy.

She stressed that while she doesn't see a single trend with regard to how families led by intermarried couples approach the holidays, at this time of year many of them are focused on figuring out how to be respectful of both Chanukah and Christmas, whether they celebrate the holidays in their own home or that of an extended family member.

While Christmas can be tough to give up for many who are raised with it, Rabbi Cameron said, the religious element is secondary to "the family connections, the music, the smells, the tree… there's a big pull to the sensory nature of Christmas."

She added that this speaks to the wider trend of younger people finding value in religion, but for things outside of the theological realm.

While families with one Jewish and one Christian parent observe the holidays at this time of year in all sorts of incarnations, it's clear that many, as in the general population, are most concerned about preserving tradition and a sense of family togetherness. ■

Journalist not faulted

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

In his most recent review of a CIJA complaint, issued Nov. 26, Tourangeau found no fault on the part of journalist François Brousseau in his analyses of the violence in Jerusalem on the program *Midi Info* on ICI Radio-Canada Première on Oct. 5 and 9.

Tourangeau concludes that Brousseau publicly acknowledged and corrected the inaccuracies.

In a Nov. 18 review, the ombudsman sided with CIJA in its complaint about the inaccuracy of a report on the ICI RDI program *Téléjournal* on Sept. 30, also about tensions in Jerusalem. Ouellette pointed out that it was "completely false" that Palestinians, unlike Jews, are not allowed to pray at the Temple Mount.

The ombudsman agreed that the error and the failure to correct it immediately contravene Radio-Canada's *Normes et pratiques journalistiques*. ■

Correction

The Nov. 26 article "Two years in, business accelerator seen as a world leader" mistakenly referred to the Jewish Russian Community Centre (JRCC) as the Russian Jewish Community Centre. *The CJN* apologizes for the error.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 10, 2015

Rabbis, bishops meet to improve Catholic-Jewish ties

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In an effort to improve the historically fraught relationship between the Jewish and Catholic communities, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) and the Canadian Rabbinic Caucus (CRC) convened late last month for the first national, bilateral dialogue between the two groups.

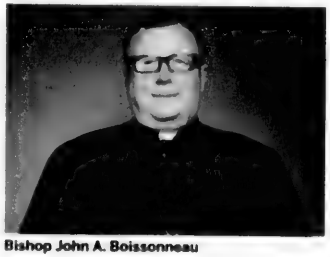
Launched as part of the 50th-anniversary celebration of *Nostra Aetate*, the declaration by the Second Vatican Council that rejected anti-Semitism and underscored the Jewish roots of Christianity, the first meeting in Ottawa was attended by some 30 bishops and 15 rabbis. It addressed the importance of changing Catholic perceptions of the Jewish community, Israel's significance to Jews, and working together to achieve common goals.

"For many people who do not come out of a historic awareness, they assume that Jews and Catholics have always sort of gotten along and there is no real awareness of the historic conflict and difficulty that we experienced," said Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, one of the representatives from the CRC, an affiliate of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). "We believe that there is still a lot of work to be done in bringing to a parish and congregational level the awareness of what had been the historic teaching of contempt, where that had led to, and how the Church has been engaged in a long process of *tshuvah* in turning away from that old teaching."

He said one key point of discussion is that "it is impossible to understand Jewish life in the 21st century without coming to grips with the two events of the 20th century that were so significant for us – both the Holocaust and the birth and continued existence of the State of Israel. For us, the State of Israel is not just a political state, it also has theological implications."

The Most Reverend John A. Boissonneau, Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto, representing the CCCB, the national body of Canadian bishops, said in a statement that "*Nostra Aetate* was one of the most precious gifts of the [Second Vatican] Council, as it reset the course for Catholic-Jewish relations. *Nostra Aetate* gave Catholics an authoritative teaching that confirmed the spiritual bond between Jews and Christians and emphatically denounced unambiguously that anti-Semitism was incompatible with the gospel of love and 'foreign to the mind of Christ.'"

In his address to the delegates at the celebration at an Ottawa cathedral, Rabbi Frydman-Kohl spoke about the significance of the dialogue and the effort to improve ties between the two communities.



Bishop John A. Boissonneau

"Our newly established bilateral dialogue, exploring Jewish-Catholic relations and what our faith traditions might offer Canada, is long overdue. While differences between our two faith communities still exist, we have moved from disputation to dialogue, persecution to partnership, confrontation to co-operation and conflict to conciliation," he said.

"Anti-Jewish theology focusing on the charges of deicide and perfidy pervaded western thought to such an extent that slaughtering Jews en masse could be imagined and take place. This denigration and demonization of Jews has been eliminated from Catholic teaching."

Speaking to *The CJN*, Bishop Boissonneau said he hopes this dialogue will help the communities understand each other better.

"We hope to continue the type of conversation in a bilateral way that has been happening all over Canada, but this is more on a national level, with participants from Vancouver, Toronto, right across the country, with French and English participants."

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said although there had been dialogue between Jews and Christians nationally for many years, it ended in 2012 when CIJA cut ties with the United Church of Canada after it voted to boycott goods produced in Israeli settlements.

"But it was clear that some of the Christian denominations wanted to maintain a conversation [locally] on an ongoing basis, even if we weren't doing it, all of us together. We were very pleased when the Catholic community responded to our interest and showed a similar interest," he said.

"As Jews, as part of the pro-Israel community, we are concerned with how we maintain a relationship with the Catholic community in Israel... on a theological level without getting wrapped up in the political."

The next meeting is in May in Montreal. ■

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Defending Israel a moral duty: pastor and Jewish leader

JODIE SHUPAC
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Christians and Jews have a moral and biblical duty to defend Israel against those bent on its destruction, a Hispanic Christian and a U.S. Jewish leader told a Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center event in Toronto last week.

Keynote speakers Rev. Mario Bramnick, president of the Hispanic Israel Leadership Coalition (HILC) and Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice-chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, both emphasized the commonalities between the Hispanic and Jewish communities and the importance of uniting against common enemies.

The event, titled "Jewish-Christian Coalition for Israel," drew a mix of about 150 Jews and Christians to Beth Sholom Synagogue Nov. 30.

Rev. Bramnick, senior pastor of New Wine Ministries Church in Cooper City, Fla., explained that HILC, a subsidiary of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, was established earlier this year to engage Latino Christians in the pro-Israel movement and "build a firewall against anti-Semitism."

We are living in perilous times, Rev. Bramnick said, and we must understand that the increased threat to Israel's existence as a Jewish state is a moral, rather than a political, issue.

Rev. Bramnick said that Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German Lutheran pastor who defended the Jews against the Nazis, showed that, "it's not enough for the church to help those crushed by the evil actions of government. At some point, the church must stand against the state that's perpetrating that evil."

Christians must join Jews in standing up to rampant anti-Semitism – which he said is indistinguishable from anti-Israel rhetoric – as well as attempts to delegitimize Israel through boycotts and UN resolutions that target it, but not countries like Iran or Syria.

"The Land of Israel with Jerusalem as its undivided capital was given by God [to the Jews] through an internal covenant," he said, and in the face of what he called "modern day Hamans" arising around the world, "in the past few years, we're beginning to see for the first time Christians and Jews uniting a new message of solidarity... to declare 'Never again,' that we won't remain silent in the midst of the vitriolic anti-Semitism."

Malcolm Hoenlein
FRIENDS OF SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER PHOTO

He cited what he said was the hypocrisy of the United States opening an embassy in Cuba, but not in Jerusalem.

He emphasized the elements that he said are shared by Jews and Hispanics, such as family values, a strong work ethic and a sense of faith, and called the evangelical Christian-Jewish alliance "one of the most important alliances of our day."

He also listed some of HILC's activities, including symposia in which pastors and rabbis give presentations about the Bible and plans to launch a Christian-Jewish theological institute.

In his speech, Hoenlein noted that one-third of Hispanics in the United States are evangelical Christians and that many Latin Americans have Sephardi ancestry.

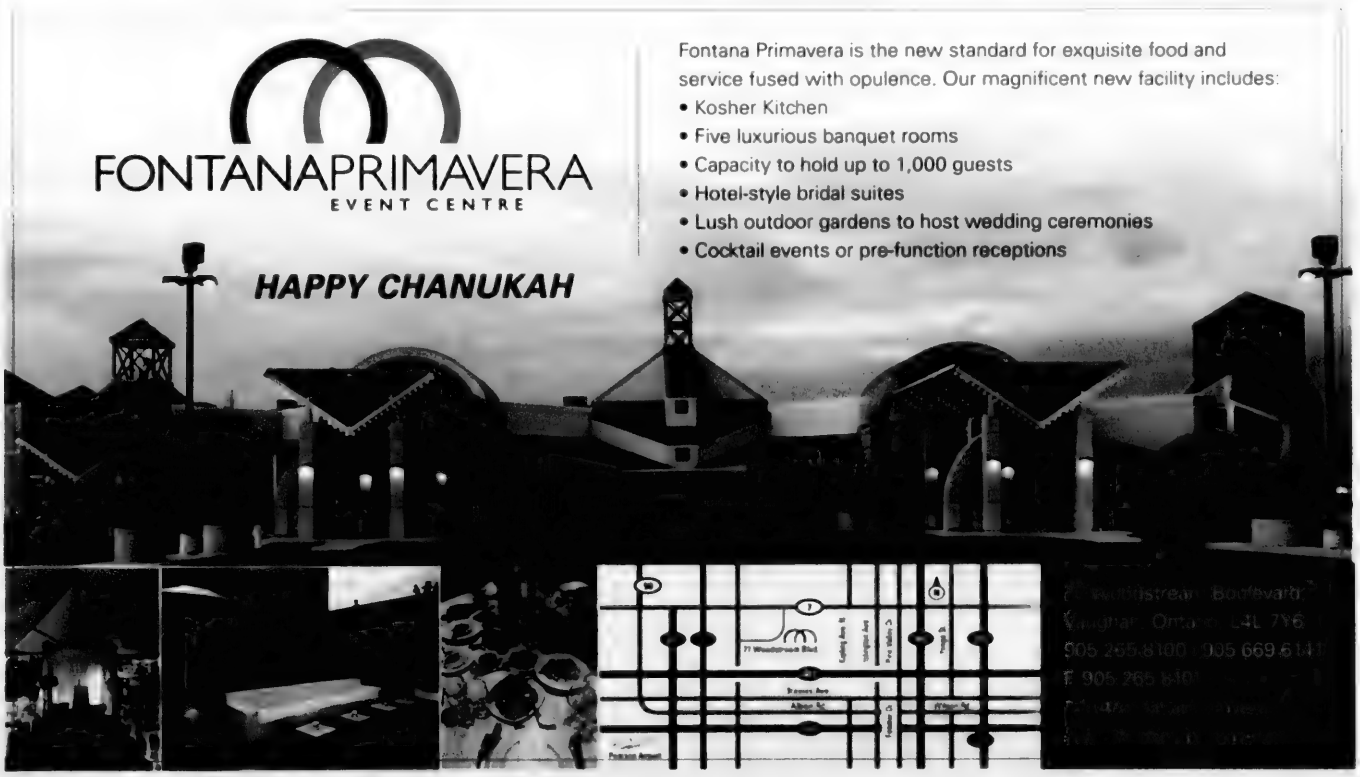
He described Jews and Hispanics as "natural allies" in a world that with borders changing, regions "in flames" and anti-Semitism and oppression of minorities rampant in the Middle East, "looks more like the 19th century than what the 20th century was supposed to look like."

He said Jews stand with groups such as the Yazidis and Kurds, because "we know that a world indifferent to them will be indifferent to us," and he spoke of distortions in the media that give Israel a bad name.

He praised former prime minister Stephen Harper for his loyalty to Israel and credited Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for "voting right in the United Nations last week almost a dozen times."

"This is an age when people will be judged," he declared, pointing to the recent opening of archives that show the Allied forces in World War II knew how many Jews were killed each day.

"They knew, but they didn't want to know. Today we know everything... The greatest dangers are apathy and indifference." ■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Russian-Israeli co-operation isn't new, local observers say

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The recent closeness between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Russian President Vladimir Putin, shown in meetings in Moscow and Paris, is nothing new, says a Russian-Jewish community leader in Toronto.

"I don't think it's sudden," Igor Korenzvit, chair of the Jewish Russian Community Centre of Ontario's board of governors, told *The CJN*.

Growing up, Putin "had very special feelings about Jews that he expressed many times before," said Korenzvit, who also sits on *The CJN*'s board of directors. "So I'm not surprised by the way he's acting toward Netanyahu and Israel."

The two leaders have met twice recently. In September, Netanyahu visited Moscow to discuss security concerns along Israel's northern border and how to avoid accidental clashes between Israel and Russian forces supporting President Bashar Assad's regime in Syria.

Netanyahu also expressed concern to Putin that Russian weapons will end up in the hands of Hezbollah, fighting in Syria on Assad's side. Putin reportedly sought to reassure Netanyahu that his fears of Syrian and Iranian aggression in the Golan were unfounded, saying the Syrian army "has no time for a second front" and artillery attacks against Israel "are being carried out by unofficial systems."

At the recent Paris climate summit, Netanyahu and Putin spoke on the sidelines for 45 minutes about Syria. Both boasted of Russian-Israeli military co-operation and promised to expand it.

High on the agenda was Moscow's anger at Turkey's shooting down of a Russian warplane that Turkey said had crossed into its airspace. Israel said it would be more careful if Russian aircraft ever entered its territory.

Some observers also said Israel's closer ties with Russia were, in part, retaliation against the European Union for its decision to label products made in Jewish settlements.

Body language and the words Putin used in the meetings suggested a "friendly" relationship with Netanyahu, Korenzvit said, "much better than [with U.S. President Barack] Obama."

"Even before the trip to Moscow, I was aware of a number of facts [showing] Putin was friendly toward Israel and definitely gets along with Netanyahu. I didn't find anything new at all."

Rather than admiration, Putin feels "respect" for Netanyahu, Korenzvit said. And now, "the world gave them more opportunity to express their relationship."

Benjamin Netanyahu, left, and Vladimir Putin met in Paris Nov. 30. ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Aurel Braun, professor of international relations and political science at the University of Toronto, doesn't think relations are as warm as they appear.

"Netanyahu has tried to make the best of a bad situation. Israel has no choice but to try and have good relations with Russia, because the options Israel has are rather limited. Russia has inserted itself in a major way into the Middle East conflict, and it has put Israel in a position where it is facing a kind of fait accompli in the absence of effective western action in Syria," Braun told *The CJN*.

Israel has been ineffective in preventing Russia from supporting Iran economically and militarily, Braun said.

But Russia does want to co-ordinate with Israel to avoid a Turkish-style accident over Syria, he added.

Braun agreed with observers who noted that Netanyahu shares with Putin a disdain for what both see as weak U.S. leadership. Their meetings are "another way for Putin to rub Obama's nose in it and say, 'You have very bad relations with Israel, I can deal with Netanyahu and he has some alternatives to you.' It's to show up and weaken the U.S. In that sense, Netanyahu is a useful element [for Putin]."

Some of the warmth between the two is genuine, Braun added. "Unlike Soviet leaders, Putin is not an anti-Semite and is not anti-Israel. On a personal level, Putin has good relations with Jews."

But Russia's involvement in the Middle East is bad for Israel, he said. "Putin is helping Assad stay in power. Assad's closest ally is Iran, which is supported by Hezbollah. How is this possibly in Israel's interest?"

Russian-Israeli ties are "more like a business relationship," says Zhana Levin, co-editor of the Russian-Jewish biweekly newspaper *Nasha Canada*.

It's a balancing act, she said. Putin needs Israel as he makes enemies in the Arab world, while "having Putin as an enemy of Israel would be too much."

But, she stressed, "I don't think it's a friendship… no leader of a normal country, would make friends with Mr. Putin. But this is business." ■

JF&CS reaches out to Orthodox community

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A gathering to learn about JF&CS

In an effort to reach out to the haredi and Orthodox communities, Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS) participated in a Shabbaton event that aimed to inform the community about the services available to them and encourage them to get involved.

In November, members of three Toronto congregations – Clanton Park Synagogue, Rabbi Yaakov Kerzner's Mizrachi Bayit and the Or Chaim minyan – took part in a Shabbaton to learn about the work of JF&CS by welcoming staff, volunteers and recipients of its services.

Rabbi Leo Davids, a retired York University sociology professor, who spoke to *The CJN* on behalf of the other organizers of the program – University of Waterloo professor emeritus Paul Socken, Eli Magder and Josh Levi – said he's been involved with the social service agency since he joined the JF&CS board in the 1970s.

"But I felt that a lot of our guys [members of the Orthodox community] didn't know what JF&CS was, what it stood for, what it did, who needed it – and I felt it was important that we get volunteers with kippahs on, who would be doing things within the larger Jewish community, rather than only within the Bathurst Street bird's nest," Rabbi Davids said.

He said there are many Orthodox Jews who don't even know what JF&CS is "unless they suddenly fall into big trouble and someone sends them there to receive service."

Rabbi Davids added that when it comes to JF&CS volunteers, the Orthodox community is not well represented.

"The Reform Jew doesn't go to shul every day… so his Jewish hours are available for community and committee work. The Orthodox householder may put more time into Jewish stuff, but it is used up in the synagogue and study activities, and he doesn't find time for the other stuff. I felt that we had to bridge that gap."

One of the guest speakers was Rabbi Ronald Weiss, the director of chaplaincy services at JF&CS.

Rabbi Weiss said in an interview after the event that the Shabbaton program focused on three JF&CS services: chaplaincy, abuse against women and foster care. He said foster parents were brought in to share their experiences.

"The whole program was meant to educate and heighten awareness. A related goal was that if people were to get inspired enough to get involved as volunteers, then the agency and volunteers would benefit from that involvement."

Rabbi Weiss said there have been misconceptions and misunderstandings about what the agency does in the community.

"With respect to the haredi community, because JF&CS is the only Jewish child welfare agency mandated by the government in North America, JF&CS is legally responsible to go into homes, and if a child is deemed to be in danger, the law says the agency must remove that child in the interest of the safety and the welfare of the child," he explained.

"The haredi community is not always on board with assessments or decisions. There has been some stress and strain between the haredi community and the agency over the years over this issue… The haredi community will sometimes feel that allowances need to be made in order to keep families together."

He said one of the things he emphasized was that the number of Jewish children in foster care has dropped dramatically.

"Last year, the number was in the 70s – Jewish kids who had suffered significant trauma living at home and needed to be removed from parents' homes and placed into care. As of the event on Nov. 14, there were 37 children in care," he said.

"That is a reflection of the fact that we, as an agency, are doing a better job, working with families to keep the families intact."

He said the haredi community tends to prefer to deal with social issues internally, and consult their rabbis, rather than social service professionals.

"What was also emphasized was that the agency works together with the rabbanim as much as possible… we work co-operatively and collegially with everybody."

He said having more Orthodox representation at JF&CS is a "win-win situation in terms of congregational education, heightening the awareness of what the agency is and what the agency does and does not do, and stimulating interest among the congregations to have their people become more involved. I've already gotten several calls from people who are interested in learning more about the programs and some who have already committed to volunteering." ■

Advertising Feature

Unity At Last?

Dr. Michael Laitman
Professor of Ontology

From Harvard academic, David Ropeik's "Terrorism – Why It Frightens, and Unites Us," through French intellectual, Dominique Sopo's "Faced With Hatred, We Must Respond With Unity," and even to the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Shawki Ibrahim Abdel-Karim Allam, who wrote, "If We Want To Eradicate Terrorism, We Must Stand Together," the horrific November 13 terror attack in Paris that left some 130 people dead and hundreds more wounded has prompted people of all faiths and views to urge unity as a cure for terrorism.

I wholeheartedly agree that – unity is a cure for terrorism. What I am less content with is that terrorism is the reason for unity. As long as fear is our motivation to unite, in the absence thereof we will also avoid unity. This is not a recipe for a healthy society. It is precisely the mindset that has led to the emergence of radicalism and fundamentalism around the world.

Disunity in our communities produces social and financial insecurity. Disunity in our families creates mistrust between parents and children, and forms barriers between spouses. Disunity at school causes fierce and often ruthless competition among peers. When disunity pervades and dominates every aspect of our lives, it causes social isolation and depression.

These, in turn, may lead to seeking extreme solutions such as drug abuse, suicide, and political or religious radicalism. Unless we reverse the narcissistic vector destroying our society, we are bound to perpetuate and enhance the radicalization of our youths and the degeneration of our societies.

If we think that sending in more troops and drones to fight ISIS will stop, or even slow them down, we are misleading ourselves. If anything, it will earn them more support because they will be able to portray themselves not only as fearful and determined (a quality with great appeal in the morally bankrupt Western society), but also as the underdog winning with spirit rather than arms.

We should pay close attention to the words of Nicolas Hénin, who was held captive by ISIS for nearly a year. "I know them: bombing they expect. What they fear is unity."

If we take a moment to step back from all this chaos and look at the bigger picture, we will see that through a process of ebb and flow, humanity is ceaselessly enhancing its connectedness. Today we have gone beyond the point of no return; separation is no longer an option. No nation can maintain a viable society or a sustainable economy if it is isolated (see what is happening in North Korea, which is not even completely isolated). Protectionism and isolation can only lead to war, most likely a world war. The problem is that so will continued intermingling of nations without proper handling of the process.

And while humanity is being pushed toward unity from every possible direction, we are doing everything we can to avoid it. When reality goes one way, and humanity goes the other, humanity is bound to lose. Unity is not an antidote to terrorism; it is the makeup of reality.

We typically define unity and harmony in our bodies by a single word: "health." And while our global society is just as interdependent as the organs in our bodies, we refuse to act as healthy bodies should, and choose instead to grab as much as we can, wherever we can, and preferably at the expense of someone else. To put it differently, rather than acting like healthy cells, we act more like Cancer. Is it any wonder our human society is sick?

The sooner we begin to redirect our minds into seeing the world as complementing elements rather than as competing fragments, the sooner we will heal our world. Nature is showing us where we need to go; it is up to us to assume this direction, abandon the notion of survival of the fittest, and recognize that we are all in one boat, and either we all sail together and reach the shore safely, or we drill bullet holes in the hull and drown.

We are not at war yet, but we have suffered several painful wake-up calls recently. Let us realize that unity is in our favor. It allows us to thrive and prosper not at each other's expense, but rather contribute our unique skills and talents to the betterment of our own lives and the lives of everyone around us.

Successful sports teams and successful companies always talk about the key role that unity and mutual support play in their achievements. We can also learn from history how disengagement among factions of nations has caused their demise. And we can all learn from nature how everything thrives only when it maintains a healthy give-and-take relationship with its environment. Whichever way we choose, we must indoctrinate ourselves with the notion that a united society is a thriving society. We have come to a point where this is the key to our survival.

Follow Dr. Michael Laitman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/laitman

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 10, 2015

Young Israelis fight stereotypes with one-on-one dialogue

SHLOMO KAPUSTIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A group of Israeli 20-somethings completed their outreach tour of university campuses with a stop in Toronto last week.

"We're at a very critical time to fight the BDS [boycott, divestment and sanctions] movement, and the community needs to stand together," said Meryle Kates, executive director of StandWithUs Canada, which organized the 10-day trip.

Known as WordSwap, the program bills itself as a "dialogue for open minds" and bets that a cross-section of young Israelis can connect with Canadian students in ways that pro-Israel activists cannot.

"It's an important message that Israel is diverse, not monolithic, like Canada," said Sara Lefton, vice president (GTA) at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. "As Canadians, we appreciate diversity, and it's important to appreciate the diversity in Israel."

CIJA partnered with StandWithUs for the final event, geared to adults, on Nov. 30 at the Rosehill Venue Lounge. More than 100 people rotated among four stations to hear the life stories of the six-person crew.

"We're always looking for ways to provide advocacy tools for members of the community," said Lefton. "This evening allows them to learn their story and hear about diversity."

Sara Lefton, left, and Meryle Kates

WordSwappers in this year's edition, the program's third, interacted with about 5,000 students in total and visited eight campuses: Wilfrid Laurier University, the University of Waterloo, McGill University, Concordia University, Carleton University, Ryerson University, York University, and the University of Toronto.

The program uses a soft sell by eschewing Israeli flags for Chinese fortune cookies containing factoids about the country. Informal conversation, not pro-Israel placards, carries the day.

"It works, it works," said Hen Mazzig, who is also education director for StandWithUs Israel. "You can see how students change their hearts, change their minds... I have never experienced such a positive effect as actively reaching students one on one, and my deepest hope as an Israeli is that we can do this mission again."

He recalled a conversation with a Palestinian woman at York University.

"She said, 'You need to understand that Palestinians are freedom fighters.' And I said, 'But civilians are being attacked – women and children are being killed. When I was 12, I was about to enter an ice cream shop and I was almost killed by a terrorist.' She didn't know anything about our side of the narrative, which I understand, but it was the first time she heard that. I'm already in touch with her by email."

Another time, he said, a professor at Wilfrid Laurier shared her negative opinions on Israel, formed by time spent with Palestinians. "She was volunteering in Palestinian refugee camps," Mazzig said, "but she didn't know there were Jewish refugees, too, and that we demand justice, too. She said she would do more research on that."

Mazzig, an Iraqi-Tunisian Israeli who served as an openly gay commander in the Israel Defence Forces, was joined by Victory Hallel Ramontsho, the daughter of a half-Jewish Ukrainian mother and Botswanian father (she underwent Orthodox conversion a few years ago); Nayef Haib, a Bedouin Muslim whose father was killed by Hezbollah while serving in the IDF; Ofek Stern, a secular Tel Avivian; Ron Lahav, who hails from an Orthodox Yemenite family; and Shadi Halaby, a Druze from northern Israel. Emily Rose, who moved to Israel from Winnipeg in 2006, joined the trip near its end, when Lahav returned to Israel for her law-school exams.

Just by attending, the two Arab members of the group dented the beliefs of some students, who thought Israel had no Arab citizens.

"We heard from a lot of people that they are tokens," Mazzig said, "but the fact that the two of them are here out of a delegation of six people means something. And we didn't have to run after them to come – they came to us." ■

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Exhibit captures Scottish Jewish life in black and white

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT, HALIFAX

Kosher Haggis. A bridegroom wearing a kilt at his wedding. Jewish and Muslim students learning Torah together. A menorah in a sheep farmer's front window.

All are typical of Jewish life in Scotland and just a few of the subjects of a photographic display presented by the Atlantic Jewish Council that opened Dec. 2 in Halifax.

Scots Jews: Identity, Belonging and the Future is the title of a show by documentary photographer Judah Passow, who spent a year capturing, in 80 black-and-white images, Scotland's Jewish community, from small villages to major cities.

Passow, raised in Philadelphia and New York and a 1971 graduate of Boston University, is based in London, where he photographs for American and European magazines and newspapers. For this showing, he culled 80 images from almost 13,000 frames.

British author Michael Mail, who grew up in Glasgow, met Passow during one of the latter's exhibitions and asked him to pursue the Scottish Jewish connection.

The exhibit debuted at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh in February 2014 and has since travelled throughout Scotland and to the United States, where it just concluded showings in New York and Boston before coming to Halifax, its first Canadian stop. Earlier this year, it was also shown at the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum in Lithuania.

Linda Kislowicz, president and CEO of Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA, who was in Halifax for the Canadian debut, was accompanied to the podium by a traditional bagpiper.

"Michael Mail contacted me two years ago about the exhibit, wanting a Canadian tour," she said. "There is a unique and special interest to have it here first in Nova Scotia [Latin for New Scotland], so we made arrangements. It will go to Toronto in the spring [to the Miles Nadal JCC]. We hope to show it in other centres, too, but nothing has been confirmed yet."

Passow's pictures show Jewish life from north to south in Scotland, where there has been Jewish life since at least the 17th century, according to Mail's research. Jews became the largest non-Christian minority as the population grew to about 16,000 at its highest point. It now numbers about 5,800.

Guests wait for the bride and groom to leave Glasgow's historic Garnethill synagogue after a wedding. JUDAH PASSOW PHOTO

"They [Jews] made significant contributions," Mail has written, "as scientists, doctors, judges, members of Parliament, artists, writers, farmers, foresters, kilt makers and even whiskey distillers."

The Halifax Jewish community and others attending the opening saw photos of a woman in the Shetlands poring over a Jewish cookbook for a special recipe; a man demonstrating blowing the shofar at an Aberdeen shul, the northernmost synagogue in the British Isles; university students in St. Andrews celebrating at an annual fundraising event, the Matzoh Ball; a kilted groom being hoisted high above the crowd by his groomsmen; Mark's Deli in Glasgow where, twice a month, a delivery of kosher food is distributed through an Orthodox synagogue; a menorah in a sheep farmer's house in Lochgilphead; a seder in Glasgow; women preparing kosher haggis for Robbie Burns Night at a Reform shul in Glasgow; and a man examining a suit at Jewish-owned Slater's in Glasgow, recorded by the Guinness Book of Records as the largest menswear store in the world.

The exhibit will be at the Nova Scotia Archives in Halifax until Dec. 20. It will be stored until early spring and then forwarded to Toronto. ■

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of Canada and my family, I wish you a
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SEPARATING? BE CAREFUL WITH THE HOME

Family Matters

by
John Syrtash
B. A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 33 years

Question: We both live in the same home and tensions are rising. I am male, aged 43. We have two small children and I would prefer to move out. What happens if I do?

Answer: This is one of the most difficult questions to answer because much depends on the facts for each case. Generally, in the absence of violence or the serious threat of violence, I advise clients to stay put and not move, but rather to get therapy or someone to speak with on how to control the tension in the home. Pending a resolution, negotiate all separation issues into the form of a binding domestic contract or court order. The reasons are multiple. First, if you leave the home and your spouse stays with the children in the absence of a written agreement, then she could be deemed to be the *de facto* custodial parent after a short period of time. This means that if push comes to shove and the parties went to court to sort out their differences a judge would likely view you leaving as an acknowledgement that the parent left behind with the kids is the one who should be making the most important decisions for them. These decisions could apply to health, education and religion. So if you choose to move out you could be abandoning that responsibility to your spouse forever. The moment you leave without the children, without a court order or signed agreement to the contrary, you will be deemed to have already granted her status as primary decision maker. A future judge could well interpret your absence from the home as giving Mom *factual* custody until the matter came before the Court for a decision on *legal* custody. Moreover, the court process could take several months. Thereafter, no matter how good a parent you claim to have been, no matter how many allegations you may have against her parenting skills, and no matter how badly the children may want to live with you, the very act of the *status quo* being with Mom for all those months and by you having entrusted them with her provide a very hard challenge to overcome in any custody dispute.

Secondly, with respect to your interest in the matrimonial home, if its registered solely in your wife's name, you may lose any interest in the increase of its value after the date of separation. Much depends on whether or not you registered it in her name solely in order to avoid prospective creditors and the extent to which you contributed to the mortgage, property taxes and upkeep. Some spouses lose the benefit in the increase in its value after separation although a recent Ontario Court of Appeal decision has made such situations less likely. Still, if you are a self-employed spouse with a business and are about to purchase a home you may wish to think twice about placing title solely in your spouse's name.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, with experience in family law for 33 years. Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit

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Synagogue is at centre of Jewish life in Peterborough

This is the second in a series of articles about Jewish life in small towns across Canada.

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Cantor Leon Litvack on the bimah

According to the Canadian census of 1881, there were two Jews then living in Peterborough, a town about 125 kilometres northeast of Toronto, known as the gateway to the Kawarthas district. Today the city has a population of about 78,000 people, of which, according to recent census tallies, some 300 are Jewish.

Despite the Jewish community's relatively small size, it still boasts a landmark synagogue, Beth Israel, designed by noted architect Eric Zeidler and erected half a century ago in 1964.

"Our synagogue is a beautiful structure, built for a community much larger than ours," said Larry Gillman, the former Torontonian who has served as Beth Israel's president for the last dozen years.

"We've worked very hard to keep the synagogue going and to keep it vital to the community."

With a membership of about 35 families, Beth Israel holds regular Friday night services, followed once or twice a month by communal Shabbat dinners in people's homes. The approximately 100 people who attend High Holiday services each year do not come close to filling the roughly 300-seat sanctuary.

"The synagogue is the central point of Jewish life in Peterborough," Gillman said, adding that "we're getting more young children now."

However, there's no denying that, like most small-town Jewish communities across North America, numbers have been in slow decline since 1945.

Formerly Orthodox, the congregation became egalitarian roughly a decade ago, just one of several adjustments the congregation has made to remain viable in the modern age. (The synagogue still maintains a strictly kosher kitchen but allows "kosher-style" vegetarian food to be served in the building.)

Beth Israel made headlines around the world last month when it offered to share its prayer space with a local mosque that was seriously damaged by arson following the Paris terror attacks. But that was certainly not the first sharing arrangement the congregation has made.

About ten years ago, Beth Israel signed an arrangement with the Unitarian Fellowship, a local non-denominational religious group that uses the building on Sundays and some weeknights.

"They're not Christian, not Jewish, not Buddhist, and they respect all religions," Gillman said. "They outgrew their building and were looking for a space. We agreed to partner with them and share space with them in our synagogue. The money that we get in rent helps us make up the deficits that we run, because we don't have enough money to operate just based on our membership dues."

Through a similar sharing arrangement, the congregation rents its space occasionally to select groups for meetings – "mostly not-for-profit groups, the Kiwanis music competition, and for elections" – and gains additional rental income by leasing use of its large parking lot to a nearby medical clinic.

"We're trying to do innovative things to keep our heads above water," Gillman said.

Beth Israel has also made a remarkable and mutually profitable arrangement with a Belfast-based cantor, Leon Litvack, who crosses the Atlantic each year to lead services in the sanctuary for the High Holidays.

A former Torontonian, Litvack discovered in recent years that his birth parents were from Peterborough and that he still has cousins there. A professor of Victorian literature at Queen's University in Belfast, he has been leading the services at Beth Israel and serving as a pastoral and halachic adviser to the congregation since 2011.

"We needed a rabbi, and Leon, with his unbelievable voice, made himself available to us," Gillman said.

"We have a community that has really fought hard to keep a Jewish presence here in Peterborough, and it means a lot of evolution," he said. "I gave an address at Yom Kippur about how we've been through a lot of change and there's going to be more change to come. We're going to continue to evolve into the future." ■

Palatucci name remains after Yad Vashem decision

JANICE ARNOLD
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The name of Giovanni Palatucci, a wartime Italian police official whose reputation has swung between hero and villain and back again, will remain – at least for the present time – on an English Montreal School Board (EMSB) building in Côte St. Luc.

The EMSB is taking its cue from Yad Vashem, the Holocaust authority in Jerusalem, which advised the public school board that it is not revoking Palatucci's inclusion with the Righteous Among the Nations.

The allegations began against Palatucci more than two years ago when a group of scholars associated with the Center for Jewish Studies in New York concluded that for six years Palatucci was really a Nazi collaborator.

In June 2013, the Centro Primo Levi at the Center for Jewish Studies sent a letter to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington citing evidence that the widely revered Palatucci identified Jews for deportation to Auschwitz. It said a dozen researchers had reviewed nearly 700 documents and found no proof that he helped Jews. A number of historians and activists in Italy also gathered what they regarded as damning material which they sent to Yad Vashem.

In response at the time, the museum withdrew the long-standing information it disseminated about Palatucci.

The EMSB, however, decided not to take any action until it received advice from Yad Vashem. It referred the matter to the then chair of Yad Vashem's Commission for the Designation of the Righteous, Jacob Turkel, a retired judge of Israel's Supreme Court.

In 2006, the EMSB named the former Wagar High School building after Palatucci who was credited with saving as many as 5,000 Jews, mainly while based in Fiume, Croatia.

The Giovanni Palatucci Facility houses John Grant High School for students with special needs, Marymount Adult Education Centre and the EMSB's book processing department.

Irena Steinfeldt, director of the Righteous Among the Nations department, informed the EMSB: "We have not received any documentation that justifies resubmitting the file to the commission. I haven't heard from the Primo Levi institute, who initiated the story in the *New York Times*, nor have I received a report from the historians' commission that was established in Italy.

Giovanni Palatucci's nephew Father John Palatucci of New York attended the building's dedication ceremony in 2006.

"As far as we are concerned, Giovanni Palatucci is on the list of the Righteous."

He was so recognized in 1990. Palatucci was arrested by the Gestapo in September 1944 and died in the Dachau concentration camp in February 1945.

The proposal to honour Palatucci was made by EMSB commissioner Syd Wise, a former Wagar principal, who died in November. The initiative was part of a larger program he introduced to foster exchange between students in Jewish schools and those in the EMSB, especially where there are significant Italian communities.

"What we did was in good faith, and we based our decision on the facts as they existed 60 years after the war," he said at the time the controversy surfaced.

EMSB chair Angela Mancini stated that it was Wise's request that Palatucci name not be removed from the building until Yad Vashem came to a decision.

"Now that we have heard from Yad Vashem, I will bring their findings to our council for further discussion. But for now that name will remain attached to the building. The fact that Yad Vashem spent over two years on this file shows that they took the allegations seriously."

The EMSB is not alone in memorializing Palatucci. There are public spaces named for him in Italy, New York and Israel. The Anti-Defamation League posthumously bestowed upon him its Courage to Care Award in 2005. Pope John Paul II declared him a martyr. ■

Together we mourn the tragic loss of

Rabbi Yaacov Don, z"l

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OPIINION

We won't stop until we have equal rights at the Kotel

Norma Baumel Joseph

What if a democratic state appointed a man who, on his own authority, restricted one group of citizens from exercising their civil rights at the public heritage site he manages. What would you do?

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz is the official manager of the Kotel, the Western Wall. This, however, does not mean that he is the rabbi of the Western Wall. The Kotel is not a synagogue, certainly not a haredi synagogue, and he is not the *mara d'atra*, the halachic decisor.

Since 1988, when some of us first prayed with a Torah at the Kotel, there has been a long series of successful legal battles (notably in the Supreme Court of Israel in 2003 and district court in 2013) to ensure that women are legally entitled to pray with a Torah (and tallit, etc.) at the Kotel.

Rabbi Rabinowitz responded by issuing two directives: no one may bring a Torah scroll into the Kotel plaza, and no one may give any of the site's more than 100 scrolls to any woman in the women's section. These are his decisions alone.

This is despite the fact that the *Shulchan Aruch* is very clear that women can touch, hold and read from a Torah scroll. There is no halachic violation here. But there have been civil rights violations on the part of the state's representative.

In response, four independent Israeli women – Shulamit Magnus, Cheryl Birkner Mack, Hannah Kehat and Andrea Wiese – with the help of Susan Weiss, director of the Centre for Women's Justice, are suing in the Israeli Supreme Court to void Rabbi Rabinowitz's decisions. Furthermore, they asked the court to void his decision banning anyone from bringing their own Torah scroll into the Kotel plaza. They are also seeking damages for this discrimination.

Women praying at the Western Wall in May 2013.

The women claim that they were "silenced, herded into an ever shrinking, distanced space, told to be onlookers while men practise Judaism." They further claim that "being denied for so long the sacred wrappings of Jewish prayer, they have been demonized and attacked physically for the same acts which, when performed by Jews who are men, are called mitzvah."

The women pray with a group known as Tefillat Nashim ba'Kotel/Original Women of the Wall, who have been praying at the Kotel with Torah and tallit and tfillin. They come from all walks of life and all religious denominations. They are Orthodox, traditional, Reform, egalitarian, scholars, activists, writers, teachers and lawyers. All are committed to that original model of diversity, inclusion, independence and autonomy and sanctified prayer. They follow in the footsteps of Rivka Haut, an Orthodox Talmud scholar from Brooklyn, N.Y., who originated and inaugurated this vision, and Bonna Devora Haberman, who carried the work of this struggle for years. Both of these pioneers remained true to this purpose to their dying days.

Shulamit Magnus, founder of a women's prayer group at the Kotel and one of the plaintiffs in these lawsuits, posted the following explanation online:

"We filed this action to press the State of Israel to enforce historic court rulings that already recognize Jewish women's full rights to religious expression at the Kotel, equal to those exercised by men there since 1967… The rabbinic administrator of the Kotel has used a 'gotcha' tactic to prevent women from being able to read Torah at the Kotel… Our suit seeks to void his 'Torah directive' on the grounds that this administrator… has exceeded his authority in issuing it and that it violates Israeli law guaranteeing equal access to and use of public space and property.

"We plaintiffs are all longtime activists in this issue, committed to its purposes for years, some of us, as stated, from the beginning… we remain committed to joining with Jewish women of diverse religious backgrounds, in solidarity as Jewish women, in prayer, in Jewish sacred space, at the national holy site of the Jewish People: to us, all these points are inviolable and non-negotiable. We refuse any alternate site, or the absorption of our cause in any other. That is why we filed these suits, and will pursue them to victory, which victory, yes, will have major implications for civil rights in Israel generally."

Twenty-seven years ago, a friend named Rivka leaned over and asked me what I thought about going go to the Kotel for Thursday morning prayers. I laughed. We were women after all, feminists and Orthodox. I laughed, yet we went.

We went with over 70 women from all sorts of backgrounds. And that describes us still today. The lawsuits represent our undiminished, continuous and courageous dedication to that experience and vision. We have not been dissuaded by other options or compromises. We have not lost hope. We know the legal rights and responsibilities of women in prayer. We know the spiritual enthusiasm that comes when praying in a holy place with the blessed Torah. We will not be diminished, removed or silenced. We will not lose our standing as Jews, obligated in prayer, part of the holy covenantal community. We struggle for the democratic soul of Israel and for the heart of justice in Judaism. ■

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The Myth of The
Resurrection
A Critical Analysis with Rabbi Michael Skobac

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KEEPING JEWS JEWISH

Longtime CJA director named Winnipeg federation CEO

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Elaine Goldstine admits to being overwhelmed by the positive responses she has received since being appointed the new CEO of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg Nov. 26.

"I have received so many emails and phone calls," Goldstine said. "It's nice to know that so many people have such confidence in me. I am a doer. I am confident that I can do this."

The longtime director of the Combined Jewish Appeal campaign here was appointed to the position on an interim basis last spring after her predecessor, Adam Bronstone, resigned after less than nine months in the position. The Torontonian became CEO in September 2014, succeeding Bob Freedman, who had led the Jewish community for 28 years.

The initial plan was to have Goldstine serve as interim CEO through the current CJA campaign period, with a search committee to be established early in the new year to find a permanent replacement for Bronstone.

"I assume that the board saw that things were going well under my leadership, liked what I was doing and decided to offer me the position," Goldstine said.

Goldstine, a lifelong Winnipegger, grew up in a family that emphasized community service. "My parents [the late Ben and Sadie Raber] supported many Jewish causes."

She began volunteering with federation more than 20 years ago, after her two sons reached school age. "I started as a volunteer with the CJA's Women's Philanthropy Division," Goldstine recalled. "After a short time, Nada Rubin, the campaign chair, offered me a job with the campaign. Eventually, I was hired to become the campaign division chair."

At the same time that Goldstine was beginning her career with federation, she was also involved with National Council of Jewish Women, Winnipeg section, eventually serving as the local chapter's president.

Goldstine's rise in the federation ranks has been an organic evolution. She assumed the reins of the CJA campaign 10 years ago after the death of her predecessor, Gerry Koffman, at a relatively young age. "I began filling for Gerry when he got sick," she said. "After his passing, I was offered the job full time."

Throughout her tenure at CJA, she and her team were able to increase the level of donations year after year up until 2014-15, when the campaign fell short for the first time in about 15 years. "We are back on track this year," she said. "We have had a good response from the community."

Elaine Goldstine MYRON LOVE PHOTO

Goldstine spoke of the need for good communications between the federation and its beneficiary agencies. "Our focus has to be on helping our partner agencies to succeed," she said.

She added that she's modelling her leadership on that of Freedman. "His door was always open," she said. "Staff members felt comfortable talking to him. He was a mentor to many."

Over the next couple of months, the federation executive will be reflecting on where the community is and where it wants to go, Goldstine said.

"We are working toward continued growth for our community," she said. "I am blown away by the large number of people who are calling our offices from different places who are considering moving to Winnipeg. Our city has become a destination. I am proud of our community."

Goldstine is also looking forward to working with the federation's new president. Lawyer Adam Levene was confirmed for a two-year term on Dec. 1 at the federation's annual AGM.

"We are on the same wavelength," Goldstine said of Levene. "We share a vision of wanting to move the federation to the next level."

Levene has been a federation board member for the past 10 years and first vice-president for the last two.

"The federation does very important work," he said. "It is because of the federation that we have the thriving community that we do." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 10, 2015

Kitchener clothing store to close after 89 years

PAUL LUNGEN
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If you venture deep into the back rooms of Budds, a landmark clothing store in the heart of Kitchener, Ont., you'll find some of the elements that made it unique.

There's a pneumatic tube system that looks like it came out of the pages of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, which was used to send money and receipts between sales stations in the store and the back room where the cash was kept. There's a printing press that would have been familiar to Johannes Gutenberg, which was used to fashion notices advertising sales and other specials; there's a folder with yellowing tear sheets with copies of Budds ads that ran in local newspapers – 50 years ago. And of course there's the clutter that you get when you've been in business in the same location for 89 years.

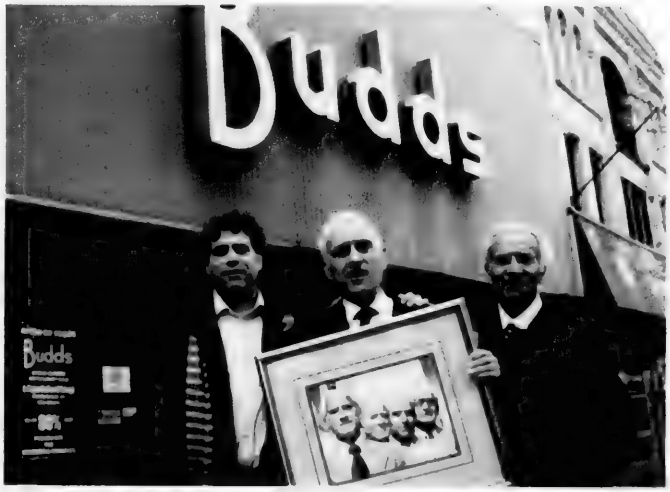
But beyond the artifacts that customers recall with fondness and have piqued the interest of the local museum, Budds will be especially remembered for the hands-on, personalized customer service that allowed it to stay in business and outlast the likes of Eaton's and other popular department stores.

All that will be gone by the end of January, when the Budd family will close the family business that has been a shopping and cultural icon in the heart of Kitchener since 1926.

It's time to retire, agree brothers Howie and Stan, now in their 70s and the second generation of the family to operate the store. Howie's son, Jeff, 45, who started in the business sweeping floors and making suit boxes before he graduated to sign maker, said the business is too large for just one person to run properly.

In addition to the Kitchener store, which is located on King Street West in the heart of downtown, the Budds operate smaller outlets in Guelph and Simcoe.

The Kitchener store alone covers 28,000 square feet, while Guelph and Simcoe have 15,000 square feet each.



Howie Budd, centre, is flanked by his son, Jeff, left, and brother, Stan outside the store that has been an iconic presence in Kitchener for decades. Howie is holding a picture of the four brothers, who started the business in 1926, from left, Nat, Jack, Mort and Lou. PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

Despite the imposing scale of the stores, the Budds were able to offer a unique brand of service that is all too absent in today's impersonal big box stores.

They knew many of their customers personally, and many are the second and third generation of families who began shopping there years ago.

The Budds spend much of their time on the floor, meeting and greeting customers and tending to their needs. Offering middle to high-end merchandise at reasonable prices, they make it a point of going the extra mile to bring in items that other stores can't be bothered to stock. If a woman wants a 44 triple D bra, they'll special order it, even if it's only one unit, Howie said.

They've special ordered slacks with a 60-inch waist for one customer, Jeff recalled.

"We're flexible. We can move quickly. There's no red tape," explained Stan.

"The big stores are getting bigger, but the Budds are getting better," he added, still speaking in the present tense. "We're hands on."

That personalized service, attention to detail and heimish environment made Budds the go-to store for generations of Kitchener residents.

Avrum Rosensweig, president and CEO of Ve'ahavta, remembers running throughout the store as a kid.

"Budds Stores was a place my sisters and I would go to with excitement," he said.

The pneumatic tubes were particularly entertaining. "As a kid, this was very amazing to watch, almost like I was at a circus," he said.

Beyond that, Budds played an important role in the life of both the local Jewish community and the broader one.

"Budds was a staple store in downtown Kitchener and important to the Jewish community... When my father was alive, he would frequently ask the Budds for clothing for newcomers to the Kitchener Jewish community. Over the last 20 years, I have asked the family for clothing for the homeless. They never said no to my father, and they never say no to me," Rosensweig said.

Stan and Howie are the second generation in the family to operate the store. Jeff is the third, but they repeatedly give credit to the first generation of Budds, who founded it.

Their story goes all the way back to 1926. At the time, the Budd family was living in Saint John, N.B., and one of the brothers, Lou, was a travelling salesman whose territory was southwestern Ontario.

While in Kitchener he learned that businessman Jack Davis, one of the founders of the 107-year-old Beth Jacob Congregation, was looking to sell a business on King Street. The asking price was $10,000, but between them, brothers Lou, Jack, Mort and Nat could scrounge together only $500. Undeterred, they visited the CIBC branch at King and Queen streets. Though they had little in the way of collateral, the manager was impressed with their work ethic and, based on nothing more than a gut feeling, he approved the loan on the spot, Stan and Howie recounted.

The brothers repaid the loan in two years, instead of the expected three, and never looked back.

In 1931 they opened a second store in downtown Guelph, and in 1933, they moved the Kitchener store down the street to its current location. They opened a third store in Simcoe in 1937.

Even in the midst of the Great Depression, the Budd stores thrived. The same formula for success – hands-on ownership, meeting customers on the floor – has stood the test of time, Stan and Howie say.

The two brothers, sons of Nat, got involved in the business in the 1960s after learning the ropes in other retail stores.

"We learned how not to run a business," Howie said of the experience.

In 1966, they expanded the premises to its current Leviathan proportions.

Jeff, who taught hockey skills in Metulla, Israel, for a time, joined the others in 1997, making for three generations of Budds in the clothing business.

But there won't be a fourth. None of his cousins are interested in maintaining the family enterprise, and Jeff believes "It's not a one-man show."

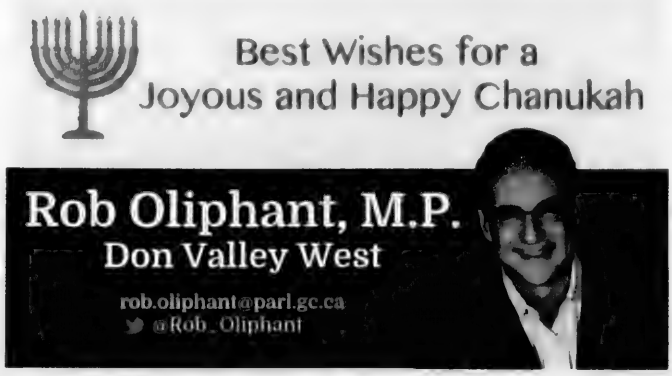
Remarkably, Howie and Stan have been working side by side, six days a week, for 50 years and still get along.

"A lot of family businesses tear the families apart," said Jeff. "This one brought us closer together."

"We never had a serious argument to the point where it broke up our families," Stan said, and Howie agreed.

As for the store itself, a lot of people are putting in dibs for memorabilia. The local museum will be looking at some of the more interesting pieces, such as the pneumatic tube network.

It still works, but instead of sending cash and receipts from sales stations to the office, it now delivers candy to kids. Eyes wide with the wonder, those children will no doubt make for one more generation of Kitchener residents who will take with them fond memories of Budds – a store that will be gone, but not forgotten. ■



Two young Canadians help N.J. shulgoers find meaning

SHERI SHEFA
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At a time when research studies are concluding that the observance of Judaism is not as relevant to American Jews as it has been in generations past, two 30-something Canadians are working to inspire a Reform synagogue in Edison, N.J., to find meaning in their Jewishness.

Rabbi David Vaisberg, the Montreal-born and Mississauga-raised spiritual leader of Temple Emanu-el Congregation, said one of the things that attracted him to this 223-family synagogue, which he's been leading for the past four years, is its inclusive, welcoming philosophy.

Rabbi Vaisberg said that under the leadership of Rabbi Al Lansberg for nearly 40 years, the congregation was "a very social-justice-oriented community. The temple is really well known for its diversity – a lot of interfaith, a lot of interracial members, Jews from all sorts of diverse backgrounds."

Cantor Aviva Marer, 33, who grew up in Ottawa, fits perfectly into the Temple Emanu-el family and serves as an example of how diverse the Jewish community is.

Marer is a member of the Bene Israel Jews from India, who can be trace their roots back to the early 15th century. In fact, her grandfather helped build the first synagogue in New Delhi, which still stands to this day.

Marer, who was ordained by the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music at Hebrew Union College in 2013, explained that her path toward a career as a cantor in an American Reform shul was a long one.

"After growing up in the Conservative movement, I spent three years in more of a modern Orthodox way of life, and I remember on Kol Nidre driving to shul and parking blocks away so that no one would see, and even though it was pouring rain, not opening an umbrella, because that would be igniting something," she recalled.

"And I think that moment for me made it pretty clear that this kind of Judaism no longer worked for me. It was definitely informed by gender as well. There is something to be said about sitting behind a mechitzah versus leading services from the bimah. That was how I came to explore the Reform movement."

For 31-year-old Rabbi Vaisberg, although he knew from the age of 14 that he wanted to obtain his ordination from the Hebrew Union College, he called himself "an accidental Reform Jew."

"I was from Montreal. My father came from Uzbekistan in the 1970s, and we lived on the west side and we were cultural Jews. I went to a preschool at an Orthodox synagogue, and we showed up occasionally for Chanukah and Purim parties, but Montreal was a Jewish enough place, like New York or Toronto, where you could do whatever you wanted and you could still feel Jewish," he said.

"When the economy tanked... my father had to look elsewhere for work and he found work in Hamilton. We had some family in Toronto so we moved to Mississauga, and there, if you don't go to synagogue, you don't feel Jewish at all," Rabbi Vaisberg said, adding that Mississauga's Solel Congregation and its retired spiritual leader, Rabbi Larry Englander, influenced his decision to pursue a rabbinical career.

In terms of a vision for their synagogue, which both Marer and Rabbi Vaisberg agree is a congregation that has always been ahead of its time, they hope it will continue to be a warm, welcoming place for Jews of all kinds, and they're always working together to define what their mission is going forward.

"I really think what is unique is our sense of camaraderie. It would no doubt be there regardless of whether one of us was American, but the fact that we're both Canadian and are informed by the same experiences has really contributed to this beautiful kind of co-clergy relationship," Marer said.

"We don't work in terms of the traditional clergy hierarchy. It's quite lovely. I think this is actually something to be said about when we came out of school and the generation we're in, Dave and I really see our roles as co-clergy in the sense that they intentionally bleed into one another. It's not uncommon for Dave to pick up the guitar and sing something, just as it's not uncommon for me to deliver a dvar Torah or teach a class."

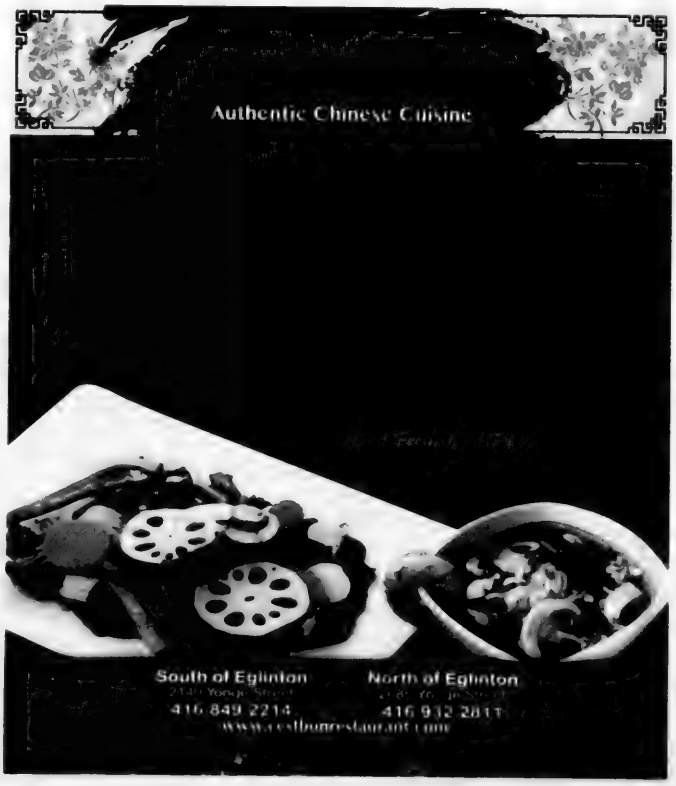
And the idea of feeling a connection to being Jewish is something Rabbi Vaisberg tries to encourage his congregation to do.

"What we bring, which is much more the case in Canada, is a sense of obligation to your culture, the sense of doing something for the value of being part of klal Yisrael. It is a value that we often push here, not to the point of doing rituals blindly, but pushing in the sense of relations with the synagogues around us, relationships with other Jews around us and participating," he said.

"I believe in engaging and grappling with our old tradition with a full heart, because when you do that, regardless of what you choose to do, when you engage in it in all the behaviours of your life, it adds layers of meaning, and it means you'll approach the world in a better way." ■

Cantor Aviva Marer, left, and Rabbi David Vaisberg

> *We don't work in terms of the traditional clergy hierarchy. It's quite lovely.*



THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 10, 2015

Coffee table book celebrates Beth Tzedec's 60th anniversary

SHERI SHEFA
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David Ben-Gurion speaks to 4,000 schoolchildren at the shul in March 1967.
BETH TZEDEC PHOTO

It was February 1967 when former Beth Tzedec Congregation spiritual leader Rabbi Stuart Rosenberg sat with Israel's first prime minister David Ben-Gurion on his kibbutz in the Negev, pressuring him to visit the Toronto Jewish community.

Ben-Gurion made that promise on the condition that he could speak, in Hebrew, to the community's school-aged children.

This is just one of the many highlights of Beth Tzedec's rich history that has been documented in *The History Of Beth Tzedec Congregation*, a coffee-table book published earlier this year, full of archival photos that date back to the 19th century, written by author, *CJN* contributor, journalist and genealogist Bill Gladstone.

In March 1967, just three months before the Six Day War, "some 4,000 schoolchildren occupied every seat in the [Beth Tzedec] sanctuary and the adjoining banquet hall. Speaking in both Hebrew and English, Ben-Gurion brought many of them to their feet, cheering and applauding wildly," the book states.

"'There can be no Israel without the children of Israel,' he told them. 'Learn Hebrew, visit Israel, go there to live, and help to make the Negev fertile.'"

Beth Tzedec's modern congregation, celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, has a history that dates back to the 1880s.

Two of the first and oldest Jewish congregations in Toronto, Goel Tzedec and Beth Hamidrash Hagadol, amalgamated in 1955, creating Beth Tzedec, which boasts the largest Canadian congregation with about 7,000 members.

"This tells the history, not only of the 60 years since Beth Tzedec's merger, but also of the 130 plus years since the founding of the congregations, and it really gives a good tapestry of the Jewish community in Toronto," Gladstone said.

In addition to interviewing people whose involvement with the congregation goes back more than a century, he also consulted archives that include old documents, photographs, artifacts, record books hand written in Yiddish, and minute books of board meetings from the earlier part of the synagogue's first century.

He said documenting this chapter of Canadian Jewish history is important and worthwhile.

"I think, in general, we are so consumed by the recent era, which we live through and know about more intimately, that we forget the glorious past of many of our Jewish institutions. Toronto has a long and fascinating history of the community so what I found fascinating were the early histories of both the congregations and the personalities that helped them survive difficult times...Of course, the modern era, and getting to know the rabbis, from the current rabbi, Baruch Frydman-Kohl, back to the accomplished and yet controversial Rabbi Stuart Rosenberg [who resigned from his post in 1976 due to bitter disputes with the shul's members of the board] – there are many fascinating stories that are a part of the history."

He credited Dorion Liebgott, the curator of the Beth Tzedec Rueben and Helene Dennis Museum, for championing this book and helping to co-ordinate the efforts of the editor, the designer and himself.

Liebgott joked the process of having the book produced has a history of its own, that dates back to 2009.

She said the first step was to get the archives updated by the Ontario Jewish Archives to make it easier for whoever was commissioned to write the book to do the research.

From there, a book committee was formed to help organize and edit the material Gladstone had produced.

Liebgott said Gella Rothstein, another member of the committee, with whom she worked very closely to organize the book and get it published, deserves recognition for her hard work.

But it was the late Bob Cohen, former shul president and the committee chairman who pushed Liebgott to see the project through to the end.

"He was such an enthusiastic and caring person who just wanted this thing to be done. He died very shortly before it was published and it was just the saddest thing for everybody," she said.

"Even a week or two before he died, I was invited to his home and I told him, 'Bob, don't you worry, we're going to dedicate this book to you because of all the energy and care you put into it.'"

She said one of the reasons the book took so long to produce was because the members of the board wanted to include an epilogue about what the future would hold for Beth Tzedec.

"But they were making plans for the renovations, and bringing in new staff to work with young people... so they weren't ready." She said the book was shelved for a number of years, but "every six months, Bob would call me and say 'What's happening with the book? What's happening with the book?'"

She said the committee was able to convince the board to tie the release of the book in with the 60th anniversary celebrations.

She said that as for the desire to put together an epilogue that looks to the future of the congregation, the last chapter tackles that subject.

"I think you see it come through based on what we've done in the last four or five years. I think you see that in the last chapter."

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the book should contact Beth Tzedec. ■

Dr. Max Glassman ז"ל
(1924 - 2015)

We are deeply saddened by the passing
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Our thoughts are with the entire Glassman family.
May his memory be for a blessing.

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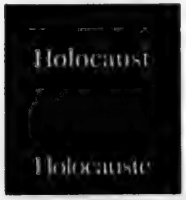

Outremont considers restrictions on houses of worship

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Chassidic community members charge that they will be "ghettoized" if Outremont goes ahead with a plan to ban new houses of worship on two of the borough's main commercial arteries.

Opponents speaking at a tense Dec. 1 public consultation on proposed zoning bylaw amendments affecting areas around Laurier and Bernard avenues said the borough is "targeting" Chassidim and acquiescing to certain residents who are prejudiced against them.

Borough Mayor Marie Cinq-Mars denied that the rezoning is aimed at restricting Chassidim, saying it applies to all religious institutions. She also took exception to complaints that she had failed to contain "hatred" expressed by supporters of the ban during the more than three-hour meeting attended by close to 300 people.

Nearly 50 people registered to speak.

Four of the five councillors voted in favour of the amendments on first reading last month, with Mindy Pollak, who is chassidic, the sole dissenter. The propoal was scheduled to go to second reading on Dec. 7.

Residents will then be able to sign a register, and if there are the required number of signatures, a referendum may be held.

The borough says the goal is to "revitalize" commercial activity. Cinq-Mars pointed out that several other boroughs have adopted similar restrictions on religious institutions in their commercial districts.

Opponents say the borough has not provided evidence that curtailing synagogues would improve business on those streets, and that no impartial study has been done. They accused it of rushing through the changes without having consulted those most affected beforehand.

Existing houses of worship in the four zones affected can remain. Thirteen other zones will continue to be open to new religious institutions, and council intends to add another one in the northwest end of the borough, near the train tracks.

Chassidim argue that they need more synagogues for their growing numbers, and in districts near where they live, including the affected zones. Close to 20 per cent of Outremont's population is Jewish, according to 2011 data.

Some of the other 13 zones are really single sites, they say, where religious buildings are already located. The proposed additional zone is not near their neighbourhood and is objectionable for other reasons.

"Cornering these establishments into a tiny space against the railway tracks is geographically problematic," Max Lieberman said before the meeting. "For both practical and social reasons, the chassidic community and other religious groups as well will find ourselves in a sort of ghetto where traffic, congestion and street safety could be a logistical nightmare."

Mayer Feig, right, confers with Cheskie Weiss at a public consultation in Outremont over proposed zoning amendments. JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

A non-chassidic opponent, Sharon Freedman, who does not live in Outremont, suggested being near a railway yard would invoke memories of Holocaust deportations.

Chassid Hirsch Hershber said it's usually "houses of ill repute" that are relegated to the outskirts of town.

Several times Cinq-Mars had to call for order, and both public security staff and police were close by. There was audible discontent from the audience after chassidic intervenors spoke in English. Cinq-Mars told participants to speak in French "if they can," but allowed English to continue to be used otherwise.

A strained moment came when Jean Larin, a 31-year resident, said the issue is the conflict between two fundamentally different visions of what Outremont is to become.

The majority, he claimed, are secular and looking to the future, while the Chassidim are stuck in the past and have values and customs that are not in line with the majority. Worse, he claimed that they "systematically" flout bylaws and "want to create a religious enclave," suggestions that provoked applause.

Ginette Chartré said about 20 synagogues, plus six "illegal" ones, are enough, and handed in a pro-amendment petition she said had 226 signatures.

The rhetoric was also inflated at times on the other side. Anti-Jewish laws leading to the Holocaust were recalled, as well as the recent Paris terrorism.

"I don't know how you can sleep at night," said Abraham Eckstein to Cinq-Mars.

Mayer Feig, a frequent spokesperson for the chassidic community, charged that the council was avoiding the "underlying issue" in this debate. He later explained that he was referring to "the 10 or so people who come to every council meeting with an agenda" against the Chassidim. "They don't like us, they want us to disappear," he said.

Other Chassidim offered reasoned arguments, including Ben Wachsmer, who suggested the presence of more houses of worship would increase business. He owns a store on Park Avenue, in neighbouring Plateau Mont-Royal, and said his trade has increased and new stores have opened since the two synagogues came on what had been a depressed block.

A non-Jewish opponent, Elizabeth Ball, said she doesn't see why people can't "pray and shop on the same street," while another, Diane Shea, accused the council of creating unnecessary division and lacking sensitivity to the Chassidim.

The borough continues to accept written comments on the matter.

Pollak said before the meeting that she has been calling on the borough to research the issue and consider more than one approach to its zoning policies. ■

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Retiring Ontario judge looks back, ponders future

SHLOMO KAPUSTIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Ontario Superior Court Justice Sandra Chapnik is giving a tour of her chambers in downtown Toronto. A binder of achievements beckons from the sofa. An old letter from pre-mayoralty John Tory – one of 206 – congratulates her on ascending to the bench.

From a shelf across the room, the first Prime Minister Trudeau looks down, sharing face time with Chapnik. And there's 1980s Sylvester Stallone, about 30 pounds short of his current fighting weight.

"I had a hip replacement last year, and I was home six to eight weeks," Chapnik says, "and I started to look through my files. They were all a mess – brochures, pictures, newspaper articles. And I kept thinking, who was that? Who said that? Did I say that? It's like an era."

Next month the era will end, as Chapnik bows to the court's mandatory retirement age of 75. Her birthday, Jan. 13, will also be her last day on the bench, though she has three months to vacate chambers and six months to render her final decision – a "significant" one, she says.

"It's bittersweet," she says. "I've been here 24 years – that's a long time – and before that, I pretty much always worked. It's part of your persona, part of your thinking. And this place, you think differently, you write differently, you discuss things with people differently. You're in a different scene."

Sandra Chapnik

Decisions on her next act are still being considered.

"I'll take some time to contemplate how I want to spend the good years that I might realistically have left and decide what's best. People say you should do this inquiry or try to get on these tribunals or boards, but I've been there, done that. So I have to figure out what's right for me: to relax and have fun in the sun or …"

Chapnik's legal career almost crashed before launch. When she married Jerry Chapnik in 1962, he was still years away from eventual success as an ear, nose and throat specialist. Teacher's college provided the most direct route to family income.

She loved teaching, she says, but law was a dream she postponed for practical reasons. "When I was a teacher, I would go to a bar mitzvah or a party, and I would find a lawyer… I would ask, 'What did you do today? I don't need any names, but tell me what you did today and what you did last week.'"

At 33, Chapnik enrolled at Osgoode Hall Law School. Her four children ranged in age from nine to three, and while her husband cheered her decision – "my husband has always supported me in every way," she says – her father was less accepting.

"He was worried that I would neglect the kids. I said, 'I might neglect you, but they're a priority.'"

Law school proved as interesting as she had expected, but life sometimes got in the way, especially before exams.

"I can't tell you it was easy," she says, "because it wasn't. I had to really learn to be present wherever I was, and that's a lesson to learn, to put one thing aside, and when they say to wear different hats to really do that. It wasn't perfect, but if one of the kids was ill, I would stay home and get the notes from a friend."

In some ways, her life experience allowed her to focus more than other students did. "There were pinball machines at Osgoode, and between classes, they'd go to pinball and I'd go and make dinner. I would read the kids a story and put them to bed – and then start reading Lord Denning [on the law]."

After she was called to the bar, her private practice covered civil litigation and family and entertainment law. Stints as a rent review commissioner, a fact finder and mediator for the Education Relations Commission and a vice-chair of the then-Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal diversified her experience.

And then the prime minister called with a judgeship.

"I was very active in the bar," she says, in partial explanation, citing two from a long list of roles. "I was on the executives of the Canadian Bar Association, and was a bencher of the Law Society [of Upper Canada]."

Some older benchers had first floated the idea of becoming a judge with Chapnik one day in the Law Society lounge.

"And that got me thinking," she recalls. "And then when you're thinking about it, you can't think of anything else – yeah, that's a good idea. It wasn't something I always aspired to, like some people."

She also benefited from societal change, she says. "I must admit, I think that Kim Campbell at the time wanted to appoint more female judges, and I happened to be there, and I met her in my capacity as chair of various committees."

The number of women on the bench has since jumped from 10 per cent to 35 per cent, but "it's not enough," she says.

Chapnik has rendered judgments in more than 500 cases since she started with a Friday afternoon injunction.

Outside the courtroom, Chapnik has had many leadership roles in the Jewish community at Holy Blossom Temple, Baycrest, ORT Toronto and World ORT, with which she currently serves. She also has provided informal assistance to StandWithUs Canada.

Chapnik has four married children and 10 grandchildren. The oldest, at 21, is taking the LSAT law admission test this month. ■

99-year-old raises funds for less-fortunate seniors

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

When 99-year-old Min Katz learned that there are many senior citizens who are not fortunate enough to live as comfortably as she does in her retirement home, she decided she wanted to do something to help.

"I was at Sunnybrook Hospital and picked up a little brochure… There was an article about health, and there was an elderly man sitting at his kitchen table. He had very little money and he was debating whether he should spend the money on food for his sick wife or for her medication," Katz told *The CJN* from her apartment at Revera's Forest Hill Place retirement home.

"I thought, this shouldn't be."

She said when she spoke to a doctor at a geriatric clinic about the brochure, she was told about a non-profit organization called SPRINT, that works to support seniors and their caregivers to help them live independently and comfortably for as long as possible.

Katz got in touch with Stacey Landau, SPRINT's executive director, to ask her how she could help.

"My thinking was this: I'm in the comfortable Forest Hill Place on Castlefield [Avenue], and we have our comforts and we are very fortunate. And it would be wonderful to share with people who don't have what we have," she said.

She said after considering a number of ideas, they settled on raising funds through a jewelry sale – something Katz has previous experience with.

In past years, Katz collected unused costume jewelry from friends and family and held jewelry sales to raise money for an organization founded by her brother and sister-in-law called Lisa Brown Charity Foundation, named after her late niece, which raised money to educate children at a young age about mental health and suicide prevention.

Through an initiative called "We Care – Aging Together," Katz started collecting unused costume jewelry early last summer, and with the help of Revera staff, family and friends, held a fundraising sale late last month at the home.

Although Katz has been holding jewelry sales at Revera since 2011, this is the first year that the proceeds from the sale will benefit SPRINT.

Revera has generously agreed to match all funds raised by the sale.

Arei Bierstock, Katz's daughter, praised her mother for taking the initiative to give back to those in need.

"My mother, I think, is extraordinary for doing this. She is just an extraordinary woman overall. She has great compassion for other people, she's thoughtful and very, very smart," Bierstock said.

"One of the exciting characteristics of the sale is that no expenses are taken out and it's win-win for everyone. For the people who are donating, they are getting rid of the things that are cluttering their drawers and they don't want anymore, and they also know that the funds from the sale of the jewelry are going to assist other people. For the people who are buying, they are getting something at a great price and are giving to charity when they do that."

Min Katz

Katz said she hopes the jewelry sale will continue year after year, and that the idea will spread to other Revera retirement homes throughout the country.

"This is also a way of helping residents get involved. One of the things that has been really important in elderly people's lives is a sense of purpose and giving back. That has been such a motivator for mom. I'm really proud of her," Bierstock said. ■

INTERNATIONAL

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Kerry, Clinton speak out against single-state solution

RON KAMPEAS
JTA WASHINGTON, D.C.

Both U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton spoke out against a single-state solution over the weekend.

"How does Israel possibly maintain its character as a Jewish democratic state?" Kerry said Dec. 5 at the Saban Forum in Washington, D.C.

Would Palestinians "be relegated to a permanent underclass? Would they be segregated?" he asked.

Kerry's forceful questioning of Israeli policy as well Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon's outright derision of U.S. Middle East policy the previous evening underscored the divisions that continue to dog the governments of U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Kerry told the forum, which is sponsored by the Israeli-American entertainment mogul Haim Saban and convened by the Brookings Institution to bring together U.S. and Israeli leaders, that he believed Netanyahu was committed to a two-state outcome, but it was clear that "many" ministers in his Cabinet were not.

Should Israel abandon plans for two states, Kerry said, the Palestinian Authority (PA) would likely collapse, and Israel would have to assume many of the functions it now carries out, including policing the Palestinians. More comprehensively, Israel would have to consider how it governs an entity with a Jewish minority.

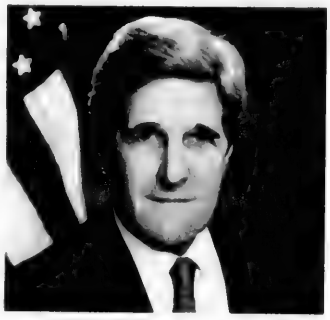
"The level of mistrust" between Israelis and Palestinians "has never been more profound," Kerry said.

Clinton spoke the next day and stressed that "it is time to stop pretending that solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will solve all of the region's problems," she emphasized her commitment to working toward a peace agreement. "I remain convinced... that peace is possible. So I refuse to give up on the goal of two states for two peoples.

"Only a two-state solution can provide Palestinians independence, sovereignty and dignity and provide Israelis the secure and recognized borders of a democratic Jewish state," she said.

"Inaction is not an option and a one-state solution is no solution, it is a prescription for endless conflict," she said, echoing Kerry's comments a day earlier.

"Everyone has to do their part to create the conditions for progress by taking positive actions that can rebuild trust and by avoiding damaging actions including with respect to settlements," she said. "At the same time, we should oppose any unilateral action at the United Nations."



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry

Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton

Clinton criticized Israeli leaders who have suggested that PA President Mahmoud Abbas is not a viable partner for a peace deal.

"It is unfortunate [Abbas] has been marginalized when there is in effect no better alternative... especially when the alternative could be the black flag of [Islamic State] ISIS," she admonished.

Netanyahu, in a last-minute addition, delivered a 10-minute video address rebutting their warning. He said the core issue hindering Israeli-Palestinian peace was the Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

"The Palestinians have not yet been willing to cross that conceptual bridge, the emotional bridge of giving up the dream of not a state next to Israel, but of a state instead of Israel," Netanyahu said.

He also called out Abbas for denying the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state, describing his comments as emblematic of Palestinian denialism that has undermined attempts to negotiate a peace agreement.

The unfiltered bickering showed that last month's friendly Netanyahu-Obama summit did not entirely patch up tensions and hurt feelings stoked by Kerry's failed attempt in 2014 to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal and by this year's Iran nuclear deal, which was backed by Obama and opposed by Netanyahu.

Kerry, at Saban, asked how Israelis imagined the international community would react to a scenario in which Palestinians were permanently denied rights. He studiously avoided the term "apartheid"; his previous use of the term to describe the likely outcome of a collapse of the peace process drew sharp criticism from Jewish-American groups.

Kerry said Israel and the Palestinians were sowing despair – Israel through continued settlement expansion and the demolition of Palestinian homes, and the Palestinians through countenancing incitement and their failure to condemn attacks on Israelis.

"Abu Mazen needs to change the rhetoric," Kerry said, referring to Abbas. Kerry singled out as "incendiary" Abbas' charges recently that Israel planned to alter the status quo at the Temple Mount-Haram al Sharif, a Jerusalem site holy to Jews and Muslims.

Clinton promised that if elected, her first task would be to reach out to the Israeli prime minister and invite him to the White House in an effort to strengthen U.S.-Israel ties.

U.S. and Israeli leaders, the Democratic front-runner said, "must remind our peoples how much they have in common and keep our relationship always above partisan politics."

Calling Israel an "ally and true friend... now and forever," Clinton vowed to "take the already strong relationship to the next level.

"It is in our national interest to have an Israel that remains a bastion of stability and a core ally in a region in chaos," she said.

Much of the recent spate of deadly violence in the West Bank and Israel has been stoked by tensions surrounding the Temple Mount.

Kerry chided leaders on both sides for sniping at one another.

"If all you're doing is hurling invective at each other on a daily basis," there is little prospect for peace, he said.

Kerry said Israel was effectively allowing Israeli expansion into Area C, the largest part of the West Bank where Israel maintains control and which the Palestinians say they need for a viable state.

"Settlements are absolutely no excuse for violence," he said. "But continued settlement growth raises questions" about Israel's intentions.

Kerry said that in Area C, Israel had granted only a single permit for Palestinian building over the previous year, while enshrining as legal many illegal Israeli settlement outposts in the area.

"You get that?" he said, appearing to challenge the Israelis present.

Israel's Defence Minister Ya'alon said the previous evening that Israel preferred a "slowly, slowly" approach to the Palestinians, preferring to focus on Israel's security needs and unspecified progress on the political and economic tracks for the Palestinians.

Kerry also sharply pushed back against Ya'alon's claims that the United States had failed to show leadership in confronting the Islamic State terrorist group making gains in Iraq and Syria.

"We have led a coalition of 65 countries to fight, degrade and defeat Daesh," Kerry said, using the Arabic acronym for ISIS. "We are not naive."

The "naive" comment appeared to be a direct rebuke to Ya'alon, who was present, and who in the past has used the term – not to mention "messianic" – to describe Kerry.

Ya'alon had said that Russia was showing more resolve in the fight than the United States.

"Unfortunately, in the current situation, Russia is playing a more significant role than the United States," eliciting some gasps at the stately Willard Hotel in downtown Washington.

Ya'alon in his talk said Israel preferred a fractured Syria as an outcome, with separate enclaves for the Shiites, the Druze, the anti-Islamic State Sunnis and the Kurds.

"This is the only good option that might come out of this chaotic situation," he said.

Kerry and Ya'alon agreed on one thing: they each said that whatever the political differences between the United States and Israel, the defence relationship remained "superb." ■

With files from Rebecca Shimoni Stoil, Times of Israel
Times of Israel.com

ANALYSIS

Is the PA heading for disintegration?

AVI ISSACHAROFF
JERUSALEM

United States Secretary of State John Kerry's scenario outlining a potential collapse of the Palestinian Authority (PA), laid out Dec. 5 at the Saban Forum in Washington, D.C., sounds more than realistic.

For a change, the U.S. administration, an expert at making fatal mistakes in the Middle East, seems to read the state of Palestinian affairs correctly, though the secretary errs in using the word "collapse."

Instead, it should be substituted with the term "disintegration," which in some ways has already begun.

The shooting attack on Dec. 3, in which Preventive Security Services member Mazen Aribe opened fire on Israel Defence Forces soldiers near the Hizme checkpoint, marks a crossroads.

Aribe was killed by fire from soldiers at the scene. The Palestinian Authority, instead of condemning or at least not supporting the action, sent head Palestine Liberation Organization negotiator Saeb Erekat and the mayor of Jericho to visit the home of the attacker's family.

The implicit message was that the PA and PLO support such actions. Has the PA come to a point where it has decided not to oppose homegrown attacks?

For the time being, the Palestinian security services are maintaining relatively high discipline and continuing the exceptional security co-ordination with Israel. Officials in the office of the Co-ordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) speak almost daily with their Palestinian counterparts, and a number of high-level security meetings are being held even in these difficult days.

Still, it is clear to all involved that there is a big question mark concerning how long this security co-ordination, and the Palestinian forces maintaining discipline, can be maintained.

What, exactly, will a PA disintegration look like? At the start, probably the way things happened last Thursday. Maybe an isolated incident, with a Palestinian police officer or two who decide to attack Israeli targets and cause many Israeli casualties.

From there, an Israeli response will follow. Or maybe an Israeli retaliatory shooting will bring a high number of Palestinian casualties.

And then will come a grassroots demand by members of the security services to act against soldiers and settlers.

And as happened at the beginning of the Second Intifadah in 2000, we will see more and more Palestinian soldiers and police joining the demonstrations and attacks against Israelis.

The path from here to an Israeli decision to impose sanctions on the PA, ending security co-ordination, would be short. And then would come a halt on the transfer of tax monies to the PA – used to pay salaries – a demand that is already being heard on the Israeli right.

Another few days would pass, and more Palestinian police who are not getting paid would decide to carry out attacks. Meanwhile, government clerks would not come to work, and of course, above all of these steps hovers the possibility that PA President Mahmoud Abbas would announce, at any point, that he is "returning the keys" to Israel and dissolving the PA: If there must be occupation, then let's have a full occupation.

A Palestinian Authority security officer outside Nablus FLASH 90 FILE PHOTO

Another, shorter scenario may materialize if the PLO decides to renege on its recognition of the State of Israel. This could be met with Israeli sanctions such as the halting of tax transfers, and here, too, the path to a complete collapse may be short.

And then what? A considerable amount of chaos, a heavy presence of Hamas and other terror groups as in the first intifadah. And, in all likelihood, Israel will have to recapture the Palestinian cities and reinstate military rule.

The security and economic burden on Israel will be heavy. And, of course, in the longer term there will be a departure from the vision of two states, or – as they will call it on the right – a sobering up. Welcome to the binational state.

If this is the shape of things to come, Kerry may have his own boss's administration to blame.

Kerry invested significantly in attempts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But he was stymied by a White House that showed amateurism and maybe even ignorance in dealing with the region's problems.

In the Palestinian context, this started with U.S. President Barack Obama's almost-obsessive focus on pushing a building freeze in the settlements.

When he decided to back off on this issue, he discovered that it was already too late, and Abbas refused to enter talks without a construction moratorium.

On the Palestinian question, Kerry acted reasonably, logically and full of motivation, at least until recent months. But problems in our neck of the woods are nothing compared to mistakes in Syria, Iraq and, of course, Iran.

For whatever reason, Washington still insists on seeing the Iran nuclear deal as a glorious achievement for the United States, even though it is far from being so.

The White House and the American administration do not have anything to be proud of regarding the Middle East, including the Iran deal.

The nuclear reckoning may be delayed, but the Iranian monster is stronger than ever and will harmfully influence the region.

This administration, which prides itself on Obama's "Cairo Speech" and on the fact that it abandoned former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and advanced democratic ideals, will leave Washington with the Middle East in ruins.

The worst is most likely still ahead of us. ■

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Parisians light menorah despite security concerns

JTA
PARIS

Some 6,000 people gathered in Paris under heavy security for the public lighting of a Chanukah menorah at the base of the Eiffel Tower, despite security concerns in the wake of last month's terrorist attacks.

French Chief Rabbi Haim Korsia lit the first candle of a 30-foot menorah on Dec. 6, the first night of Chanukah in the Eiffel tower ceremony attended by French Jewish leaders and government representative and sponsored by Chabad-Lubavitch.

"This year, Chanukah delivers a particularly relevant message," Rabbi Chaim Schneur Nisenbaum of the Complexe Scolaire Beth Haya Moushka school system in Paris said. "In Paris, we very recently faced terrible attacks ... intended to put an end to freedom of mind and opinions. In the historical times of Hanukkah, the invaders of the land of Israel, the Greeks, had the same intention. But the Jews did not submit."

The Eiffel Tower event is one of more than 30 public menorah-lighting celebrations scheduled to take place across the city and in nearly 100 towns nearby. The public gatherings, which had to be approved in advance, are being held under heavy security, according to Chabad.org.

Rumours circulated before Chanukah that public menorah lightings would be canceled in light of the state of emergency in Paris initiated after the Nov. 13 co-ordinated attacks that left at least 130 dead.

Two of the menorah lighting venues of previous years, Republic Square and Bastille Square, both located near the Bataclan theater – the site of one of last month's attacks – were not approved, Rabbi Nisenbaum told Chabad.org.

Public Chanukah celebrations in the French city of Marseille will be held indoors this year at the request of public security officials, according to Chabad.org. Marseille has been the location of several violent attacks against Jews in recent months and has a history of attacks on Jews. ■

Complaint filed against prof over rebuff of Israeli girl

RENEE GHERT-ZAND
JERUSALEM

An anti-Semitism watchdog organization in the United Kingdom has filed a complaint with the police against Marsha Levine, the British-American former Cambridge University professor who rebuffed a request for information from an Israeli schoolgirl, citing Israel's treatment of the Palestinians.

The Campaign Against Anti-Semitism filed the complaint with the Cambridgeshire Constabulary following the recent media storm that erupted when the mother of 13-year-old Shachar Rabinovitch posted a message on Facebook detailing Levine's response to an email from her daughter.

Shachar, a horse enthusiast, had contacted Levine, an expert on the domestication and history of the animal, asking for information about breeding patterns and the use of horses by humans in ancient times.

According to Shachar's mother, Levine responded to her daughter by saying, "I'll answer your questions when there is peace and justice for Palestinians in Palestine."

When interviewed by *The Jewish Chronicle* on the matter, Levine defended her response to the Israeli girl. She identified herself as a member of the pro-BDS Jews for Justice for Palestinians and characterized Israelis as "monsters."

"Benjamin Netanyahu wants ethnic cleansing. The Jews have become the Nazis," she said.

"I don't see any obligation to further her ego or make her feel better about herself," Levine said of the girl who had merely sent her the inquiry about horses.

Jonathan Sacerdoti, director of communications for Campaign Against Anti-Semitism, refused to comment further on the complaint lodged with the police.

"At this time we can't say anything that might prejudice the investigation that the police have undertaken," Sacerdoti told *The Times of Israel* on Dec. 4.

Campaign Against Anti-Semitism is a year-old charity organization founded to research and monitor anti-Semitism in the UK. It also engages in raising awareness and strengthening education about anti-Semitism. The organization, which is independent of other UK Jewish community organizations, says it relies entirely on a large network of expert volunteers in a variety of fields, all of whom work pro-bono.

According to Sacerdoti, the organization seeks legal counsel when it suspects that the law may have been broken, and it takes action if advised to do so.

> *The Jews have become the Nazis*
>
> **Marsha Levine**
> **Cambridge University professor**

"We are pushing for a zero tolerance policy under British law with regard to anti-Semitism," he said.

Unlike Levine, who has refused to help Rabinovitch, several other experts on horses have offered to provide her with the information she seeks.

Prof. James Russell, a member of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University, contacted the *Times of Israel* saying, "I have done some research in this subject, have published a bit on ancient horsemanship, and would be delighted and honored to be of service to the student."

Russell said he found Levine's "politicization of school children" to be "beyond belief."

"Prof. Levine's conduct is unprofessional and beneath human contempt. It makes one ashamed to be a member of the same academic profession. But it does reflect very accurately the character of the BDS movement and of those who support it," he said.

Russell said he has regretfully seen politics come into play and professors shame students in university classrooms.

"This, however, is a first. This really crossed a line," he said of Levine's response to the child.

Russell, who has been a visiting professor at the Hebrew University and regularly returns to Jerusalem, plans on bringing a book for Shachar when he makes a trip to Israel later this month.

"It's titled, *The Horse, The Wheel, and Language*. It's very big and very scholarly and it's in English. I don't know whether Shachar will be able to absorb it all right now, but if I bring it and give it to her she can live with it and read it as she grows up. In the meantime I'd be happy to answer her questions as best I can," he said. ■

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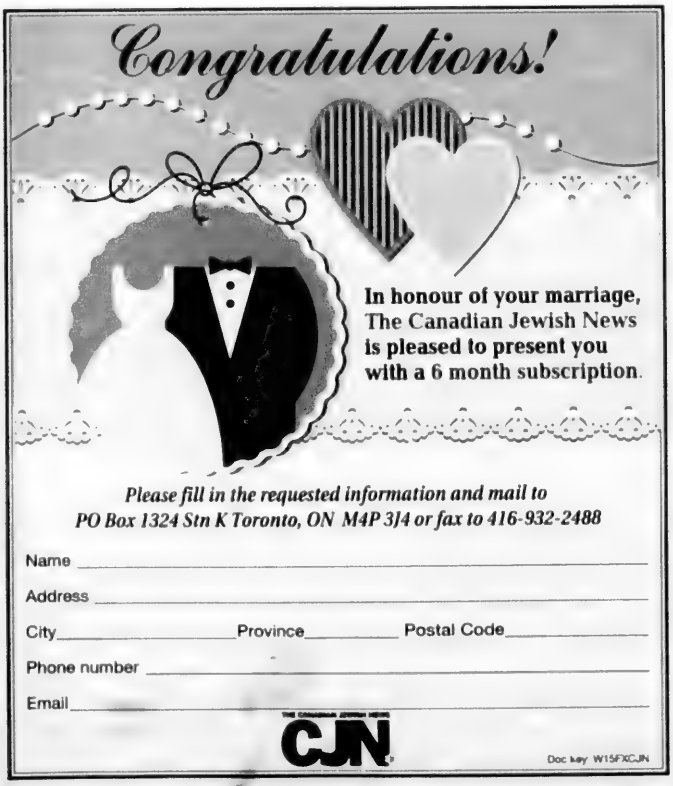
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Left-wing MK recalled for his 'honesty and integrity'

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
JERUSALEM

Family and friends of former MK Yossi Sarid attend his funeral in Givat Hashlosha cemetery near Petah Tikva on Dec. 6. FLASH90 PHOTO

Politicians, public intellectuals and hundreds of Israelis from all walks of life gathered Dec.6 at the Kibbutz Givat Hashlosha cemetery on the outskirts of Tel Aviv for the funeral of former Meretz party chairman Yossi Sarid, who died Dec. 4 from heart-related causes at the age of 75.

"My father was always concerned about something or other, and the weight of the world was always on his shoulders," Sarid's son Yishai said at the funeral. "Dad told me that a man should live not only for himself, but also for others."

Known for his articulate, sardonic style and colourful turns of phrase, Sarid was a member of nine Knessets from 1974 to 2006, serving as a lawmaker for the (Labor) Alignment, Ratz and Meretz parties.

An icon of the Israeli left, Sarid held two portfolios – education and environment – and led Meretz from 1996 to 2003, serving as head of the opposition for the latter two years of his party leadership.

After retiring in 2006, he began a weekly column in the liberal newspaper *Ha'aretz*.

Yishai Sarid recalled the hostile attitudes his father encountered while serving in office, but added that the politician was never deterred and continued to strive to achieve a better future for the State of Israel.

"I remember the graffiti [against Sarid] and the threats on the phone, [but] I also remember the short time that Father served as a minister in the Israeli government," Yishai Sarid said. "He tried within his power to do what was right and what was good."

Author Amos Oz, one of Israel's most prominent writers and a close friend of Sarid, paid tribute to the left-wing public official at the funeral as well.

"We part today, on the first night of Chanukah candlelighting, with a person who emitted such light," Oz said. "We part with a brave and wise man, stubborn and wide-eyed. He was one of the first who noticed that occupation and annexation lead to disaster, that religious coercion threatens our very link with the heritage of the people of Israel. [Sarid's] attachment to the heritage of Israel was deep and emotional."

Meretz Leader Zehava Galon also paid tribute to her former colleague after he was laid to rest.

"Yossi Sarid devoted his life to the struggle against a reality in which Israel becomes more violent and less democratic, a messianic state, withdrawn and paranoid, led by a government that shuts them down, passes racist legislation, and deepens the discrimination against Israel's Arab citizens," Galon said.

"Yossi, in his words and deeds, fought for the best image of the State of Israel, an educating [country], secular, democratic, peaceful, equality seeking and loving."

Earlier, ideological opponents and political allies alike mourned the death of Sarid.

"Yossi Sarid was a unique voice in Israeli politics, an opinionated, sharp man," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said of the left-wing public official on Saturday.

"Although we differed on many issues, I appreciated his loyalty to his path, his broad education and the meticulous Hebrew expressed in his speech and writings. He will be remembered also for being a prominent parliamentarian, a longtime member of the foreign affairs and defence committee, and an education minister who sought to advance the education system in Israel."

President Reuven Rivlin, who served as an MK with the right-wing Likud party during Sarid's tenure as head of Meretz, called the deceased parliamentarian a "tough political opponent, challenging and loyal to his views." Sarid, Rivlin added, was "one of the greatest politicians of the State of Israel."

Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon of the Likud mourned Sarid's death as well, noting his unabated concern for the well-being of the state and its citizens.

"Despite the political debate I had with Yossi Sarid, I always appreciated his honesty and his integrity, his intelligence and sharpness of wit, and the fact that he followed the path he believed, according to his conscience and values, without having to deviate from, or adapt to, any passing fad," Ya'alon said. "Sarid was an Israeli patriot whose concerns for the future of the country and its security were at the top of his mind, as a Knesset member, a minister of education, as a public leader, and as a sharp writer."

Meretz Knesset faction chair Ilan Gilon said Dec. 4 that Sarid will "always be remembered as the man who made an indelible mark on education in Israel. After his political career, he became a journalist and man of letters of razor-sharp tongue and pure voice, loyal to the values of humanism, human rights and peace. His image will forever be etched in our hearts."

MK Tamar Zandberg, a fellow Meretz member, said Sarid's death was "a personal and political loss for the left and the whole country. "We are talking about a leader, a sharp and honest person, a courageous man from whom I learned a lot over the years. We cried over his departure from politics and now we mourn over his passing. May his memory be blessed."

Meretz MK Issawi Frej said, "Sarid was a father to me, and served as no less than a political and ideological compass. Yossi is one of the people thanks to whom I continue to believe in the possibility of making the State of Israel a better and more just place."

Zionist Union MK Tzipi Livni called Sarid's passing "the death of a fighter for the core of this country.

"You could disagree with him, but you could not avoid listening to his razor-sharp words. Even at his most cynical, his words always came from the least cynical and most painful place possible. May his memory be a blessing," she said.

Zionist Union head and Opposition Leader Isaac Herzog called Sarid "an important leader of the Israeli peace camp. His sharp, clear voice always stood out stubbornly for a brave, uncompromising truth he believed with all his heart. As minister of education, he left a deep mark on the education system and the country as a whole. His beliefs, writings and life work will remain a formidable heritage that will be with us all for years to come."

Merav Michaeli, another Zionist Union MK, also paid tribute to Sarid, calling him a role model. "I have been a fan of Yossi Sarid since June 1982. I was in 10th grade that year when the [First] Lebanon War broke out. The only one to oppose it clearly and loudly was Yossi Sarid. All the others took more or less time to understand this was a futile war, and I remember how impressed I was with his courage to come out against it.

"He was a model for many of us and now a great loss for all of us, even those who opposed him. His is a voice Israel needs now more than ever, and it is our responsibility to continue sounding it. How sad it is to part with him so prematurely," she added.

Yossi Sarid is survived by his wife, Dorit, and their three children. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

Adiv Sterman contributed to this report.

ZAKA honours the living around the world

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, JERUSALEM

Yehuda Meshi-Zahav has travelled far from his Neturei Karta origins. Growing up haredi in a family fervently opposed to Zionism, Meshi-Zahav, chairman of ZAKA Search and Rescue, has turned his life over to serving Israel and the Jewish people.

He'll be in Toronto this weekend with an important message for Jews all over the world. "ZAKA is not our organization. We are only the soldiers in the field doing this work, but the organization belongs to the Jewish people around the world."

Best known for its work in what ZAKA International director David Rose calls "forensic *chesed shel emet*," ranging from terrorism to car accidents and suicides, ZAKA volunteers show up far beyond the scenes most people associate with the organization's distinctive fluorescent green vests.

In 2010, ZAKA – an acronym for "identifying the victims of disaster" – travelled to Haiti to retrieve the body of 36-year-old Montreal businessman Shmuel Alexander Bitton, who had just checked into his hotel when a deadly earthquake struck. Though the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) said searching was too risky, and local authorities wanted to bulldoze the building, ZAKA combed through the hotel until Bitton's remains were found.

In 2006, ZAKA volunteers were also on scene to search for two Toronto men who went missing while fishing on Lake Nipissing, Ont.

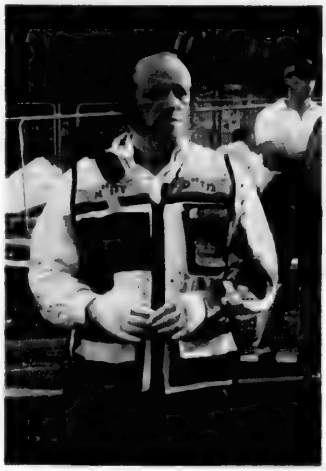
"What other organization will go from one end of the earth to the other to bring back the body of a Jewish boy?" asks Meshi-Zahav. In the week he spoke with *The CJN*, ZAKA was active in the Philippines and Mali, as well as countless incidents within Israel itself.

Canadian Ambassador Vivian Bercovici has encouraged Meshi-Zahav to travel to Canada, to set up local units if possible. He will speak at Kehillat Shaarei Torah in Toronto on Shabbat Chanukah as well as at Aish HaTorah's Thornhill Community Shul.

Sharing ZAKA's message is a mission Meshi-Zahav accepted the day he witnessed a terrorist bus explosion in 1989. An 11th-generation Jerusalemite with ties to the extremist Eda Haredit, his family had demonstrated against the State of Israel. All that changed in an instant.

"I had to put aside all my differences," he says. "I started to interact more and more with Israelis, with Zionists, with the government." Though his family and community denounced him, he insists, "This is the way I live. This is what I believe in."

On Yom Ha'atzmaut in 2003, Meshi-Zahav was given the honour of lighting a torch in the main government ceremony on Mount Herzl.



Yehuda Meshi-Zahav in Jerusalem after a bus bombing COURTESY OF ZAKA

"People talk about divisiveness in Israeli society. They need to come to ZAKA to see just the opposite, how we can get along with one another. Regardless of what you are, what sex, what you believe in; Jewish, not Jewish; religious, not religious."

The organization already has teams all over the world, including in England, New York and France. In terrorist incidents at the Hyper Cacher market in Paris last year, and a few years earlier in Toulouse, local ZAKA units were ready to respond. "It's something that people don't think is going to happen," says Rose. "But ZAKA is always ready for what tomorrow brings."

ZAKA's motto is, "Saving those who can be saved; honouring those who cannot."

In Israel, ZAKA volunteers, many of whom also work with Magen David Adom, contributed 1.5 million hours in 2014. Although most are Orthodox or haredi, they come from all walks of life and serve every victim, regardless of background, race, ethnicity or religion, including the terrorists themselves.

"The work of ZAKA is absurd," says ZAKA's northern chief officer, Chezky Farkas. "We take care of the victims and also the person who killed them."

However, in October, at Meshi-Zahav's initiative, ZAKA started using black body bags for terrorists' remains.

"ZAKA is a holy organization," says Meshi-Zahav. "We have to deal with (terrorists), but at the same time, we're not going to honour them the same way." Terrorists' bodies are also transported separately.

He and his team have travelled to Thailand, Nepal, Mumbai and beyond. "There isn't a shaliach of Chabad who doesn't know Yehuda Meshi-Zahav," says Rose. "There is not an Israeli ambassador or consul around the world that Yehuda cannot call up at 2 o' clock in the morning." With his distinctive white beard and payot, he is often recognized on the streets of Israel with waves and shouts of gratitude. "He's a celebrity in Israel today."

In the Mali terrorist incident on Nov. 20, in which an Israeli teacher was killed, ZAKA acted as an unofficial government emissary, since Mali does not maintain diplomatic ties with Israel. ZAKA is recognized by the United Nations for its humanitarian work, and consistently ranks second after the IDF among the country's best-loved NGOs.

ZAKA's holy imperative comes from the Torah, which teaches that a hanged murderer should not be left overnight. "Each person is created in the image of God." Even the High Priest on his way to perform the Yom Kippur service in the Holiest of Holies – if he encountered an unattended body – had to drop everything to bury the body.

Despite the halachic urgency of his task, Meshi-Zahav says ZAKA is more about honouring the living than the dead. "The psychological effect on a family," he says, "for them to have that closure, that's the most important thing we can do today.

"ZAKA is the only organization in the world that hopes we'll be out of a job," says Meshi-Zahav. "But we have to be ready, we must be available in real time, and we must have the tools that we need in order to continue doing what we need to do." ■

California terrorist was 'obsessed' with Israel, his father says

ROSSELLA TERCATIN
ROME

Syed Farook, father of San Bernardino terrorist Syed Rizwan Farook, has described his son as negatively "obsessed" with Israel.

In an interview with Italian daily *La Stampa*, Farook said that he once tried to console his son by promising him that Israel would not exist in another two years because "China, Russia and America will bring the Jews back to Ukraine."

In last Sunday's *La Stampa* report, Farook said, "My son said that he shared [Islamic State leader Abu Bakr] Baghdadi's ideology and supported the creation of the Islamic State. He was also obsessed with Israel."

"I told him he had to stay calm and be patient because in two years Israel will not exist any more. Geopolitics is changing: Russia, China and America don't want Jews there any more. They are going to bring the Jews back to Ukraine. What is the point of fighting? We have already done it and we lost. Israel is not to be fought with weapons, but with politics. But he did not listen to me, he was obsessed," Farook explained to U.S. correspondent Paolo Mastrolilli.

Farook's son is suspected of carrying out a mass shooting that killed 14 people in San Bernardino, Calif. The father was interviewed in Corona, Calif., where he lives with his older son, Syed Raheel Farook, a U.S. Navy veteran.

Farook senior was born in Pakistan and arrived in the United States in 1973. The family has been described by many as very integrated in American society, almost the embodiment of the American dream.

Farook told *La Stampa* how, once in the United States, he got a degree in engineering and started to work hard to guarantee his children "an education and the opportunity to succeed in life."

Other reports told a more nuanced story: Farook split from his wife Rafia, also Pakistan-born, who filed for divorce in 2006 and, according to the *New York Times*, said her husband was violent and an alcoholic and beat her and the children.

In the *La Stampa* interview, Farook denied the accusations, saying that "Rizwan's mother is very religious, as he was, and they united against me. Once we had a dispute over the historical figure of Jesus. My son called me a godless person and he decided that my marriage with my wife had to end," he recalled. "They destroyed the family."

Farook declared himself in complete despair and disbelief over what his son allegedly did. His daughters, Rizwan's sisters, told the *New York Times* that they had seen no warning signs. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

Jewish Life

I'll Never Smile Again a true story of lost love

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

I'll Never Smile Again, a song penned by a Jewish songwriter from Toronto, launched Frank Sinatra's career and held the No. 1 spot on *Billboard* for 12 weeks in 1940.

Since then, *I'll Never Smile Again*, written by Ruth Lowe, has been recorded by dozens of artists, including Count Basie, Fats Waller, George Shearing, Billie Holiday, Michael Buble and, most recently, by Toronto singer Molly Johnson.

The sad story behind the song was a factor in the success of the standard penned by his then 25-year-old mother in 1939, Tom Sandler said. Lowe, a talented pianist, joined an all-girl touring band in 1935. While in Chicago, she went on a blind date with Harold Cohen, a song plugger. They married in 1938, but a year later, Cohen died during routine surgery at the age of 29.

Devastated, Lowe returned to Toronto. One night she sat down to play piano and transformed her mood into the melody for *I'll Never Smile Again*, Sandler said. Meanwhile, Lowe's family was in financial straits. To help support them, Lowe got a job playing piano at CBC, where she met the bandleader Percy Faith, who recorded *I'll Never Smile Again*.

When Tommy Dorsey came to town with his band, along with his new vocalist, Sinatra, Lowe pitched the song to Dorsey, who was likely impressed that a young woman had an orchestrated arrangement of her song on record, Sandler said. "He had tried a couple of other songs with Sinatra before they did *I'll Never Smile Again* and they didn't go anywhere, and they were looking for a song that would launch his career. When he heard *I'll Never Smile Again*, he knew that it was 'the' song."

Another factor in the song's success was its timing, he said. "The war had just broken out and women were losing their husbands. It was a song that everyone could relate to." Sinatra, who would have turned 100 on Dec. 10, liked *I'll Never Smile Again* so much that he asked Lowe to write another song for him. She then co-wrote *Put Your Dreams Away*, which became Sinatra's signature closing song in the 1940s. It was played after his funeral in 1998. Once Lowe got over the tragedy of losing her young husband, she had a lot of fun, Sandler said. In 1945, shortly after another blind date, Lowe married the late Nathan Sandler, the first Jewish member of the Toronto Stock Exchange. They had two sons, Tom, who was named after Tommy Dorsey, and Stephen.

"She was crazy about my dad and they had a great relationship," Tom said. Lowe didn't stop writing songs, though. One of them, an upbeat gospel tune she wrote with Sandler, called *Take Me To The River*, was recorded by The Travellers in the 1960s.

Sandler remembers a parade of well-known local musicians, including Rob McConnell, Peter Appleyard and Oscar Peterson, visiting his family's Forest Hill home. Lowe also kept in touch with some of her songwriter pals, among them, Sammy Cahn and Johnny Marks (the Jewish American songwriter who penned *Rudolph, The Red-Nosed Reindeer*), and she frequently visited music publishers in the Brill Building in New York.

Sandler said his mother, who died in 1981, was a musician's musician and has been credited with being one of the architects of the American ballad.

Seven years ago, Sandler, a photographer, was hired to take pictures at a charity event where he met the musical giant Quincy Jones. Jones told Sandler he'd first heard *I'll Never Smile Again* when he was 10 years old. "Not only do I only remember the song, I remember the story behind the song. It was one of the songs that inspired my career," Jones told Sandler.

I'll Never Smile Again has been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame and into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame, along with *Put Your Dreams Away*. To see an excellent documentary about Lowe, visit YouTube and search for Ruth Lowe. ■

Frank Sinatra, top left, Ruth Lowe on the piano, and Tommy Dorsey.
PHOTOS COURTESY TOM SANDLER

A dialogue between siblings

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Conversations For Two
by Jacqueline Markowitz

The Jam Press

Conversations for Two, is a multi-layered exploration of suicide and grief, and yet despite the grim subject matter, this book is a surprisingly easy read.

The narrator of this debut novel by Jacqueline Markowitz is a middle-aged mother named Jackie, who is trying to make sense of her older brother John's suicide. She revisits the trauma she experienced as a teenager struggling with the shock of John's death and mines his writings to gain insight into who he was and why he ended his life.

By integrating his poetry and writings into the narrative, Markowitz has set up a remarkable dialogue between the siblings, hence the book's title. By probing her late brother's writings, the narrator brings him to life.

In a recent interview, Markowitz called the book a work of "fiction with elements of true life experiences."

She did indeed have an older brother named John, who had been an accomplished poet and a prolific writer. He did, in fact, commit suicide at age 24 and she had to grapple with his death when she was 17.

Markowitz also disclosed another important fact: her brother's actual writings were lost to the family, but 25 years after his death she was able to retrieve his works through a chance encounter, which she details in the book.

This serendipitous event inspired Markowitz to write *Conversations for Two*, she said. "I feel that this book wanted to be written. It was bashert."

One of the most fascinating aspects of this novel is the unique interplay between the fictional narrative and John's actual writings. "His poetry and my prose intermingle," Markowitz said.

The font changes as the writing shifts back and forth between the siblings. "I talk to him a lot in the book. Through his writing I got a sense of knowing him in a more intimate way."

Much of the narrative takes place in and around Toronto of the early 1970s. Jackie's adolescent memories of John surface, but they are filtered through the lens of her adult self.

She recalls happy times with John – a Beatles concert, rock festivals, visits to the commune where he lived and hanging out with his hippie friends.

Markowitz aptly captures the mood of those times – the legendary music, the psychedelic colours, the flowing skirts, peasant shirts, bandanas, drugs, and iconic Toronto landmarks like Grossman's Tavern on Spadina Avenue, the experimental Rochdale College and Yorkville, then a hippie hangout

Her description of Yorkville exemplifies her rich prose writing. "Music exhaled through doors ajar and trinkets and talismans bejewelled the boutiques. They gathered, flower children stirring in an intoxicating brew of peace and love."

John's life – much of which Markowitz imagined from his writings – was defined by the counter-cultural movement and his poetry reflects the ethos of that era: "suns & smiles, a collection of poems written with the purpose of writing a poem perhaps to further the never ending cause of peace and love."

In contrast to this world, Markowitz has also rooted the story in the mundane details of the narrator's upbringing. Hers was an ordinary middle-class home, that typified many Jewish households in Toronto.

Markowitz makes reference to the sponge cake Jackie's mother made from a recipe from *Second Helpings Please!*, the kosher cookbook so ubiquitous in Jewish homes across Canada.

She describes her mother's china cabinet with its quintessential display of prized English bone china cups and saucers that were so common in mid-20th century homes before the onslaught of made-in China tchatchkes from the dollar stores of the 21st century.

Conversations for Two is an impressive undertaking. It succeeds in immersing the reader into the dialogue between the protagonist and her late brother, offering insight into the pain and grief triggered by a sudden and untimely death.

The book can be purchased online through thejampress.com and in Toronto at Type (427 Spadina Rd. or 883 Queen St. W.) An e-book edition is available through Amazon. ■

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Parfumerie's playwright relies on an old friend

DOROTHY LICHTBLAU
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Parfumerie starring Gregory Prest and Michelle Monteith is adapted by Adam Pettle and Brenda Robins.

Ask playwright and television screenwriter/producer, Adam Pettle why he and actor/writer Brenda Robins decide to create another adaptation of Miklos Laszlos' 1937 romantic play *Parfumerie* and his response is matter-of-fact.

Robins, a friend and colleague, who is a classic movie buff, realized that this oft-retold tale about two shop clerks who bicker throughout the day but at night unwittingly write anonymous love letters to one another, still moved audiences.

Interested in bringing the show to Toronto, she approached Soulpepper's artistic director Albert Schultz about creating an adaptation of *Parfumerie* for his company. Schultz was interested but since Robins was a novice writer, he advised her to team up with an experienced professional.

Robins tapped Pettle on the shoulder. Not only was he glad to work with his friend and to see her through the project but he thought that this old world romance could be a success. "It's an aspirational, feel good story with great holiday potential", he explains.

Though he began his career as a playwright, writing *Therac 25*, *Zaidie's Shoes*, *Sunday Father*, and *Rattle the Bones* among others, over he past eight years Pettle has been producing and writing for television. Currently he is the show runner and executive producer for *Raising Hope*, a CTV drama series. Much of his current work involves bringing together and shaping the final scripts for the series' shows. He took a similar role when working with Robins.

Since Robins initiated the project and brought in the budget for the story she led the writing. Pettle says, "Brenda would send me drafts of the work and I would make suggestions or edits. Brenda is a wonderful actor, who brought a beginner's mind to scriptwriting. She was more loose and free in her approach, while I was more aware of structure, so was able to dramaturge and help shape her play."

Pettle describes their adaptation as a marriage of a certain kind of European sensibility, along the lines of Chekhov or Molière, with romantic comedy. He calls the result, "a warm and witty play with some darker moments."

Laszlo's original work is a romance but also an homage to the people and places of his hometown, Budapest, before World War II. Though laced with humour, the script does not shy from alluding to citizens' fears of what looms ahead.

"Our adaptation," explains Pettle, "successfully brought together a love story that at times reveals characters' concerns and longing. Sometimes the play switches mood on the turn of a dime. This is something I'm drawn to; bringing comedy and tragedy to play side by side."

Pettle observes that Toronto audiences seem to enjoy the family feeling of the play and the romance at its centre. He feels, too, that audiences take pleasure in watching the folks on stage enjoying the festive season, just as they currently are. Specifically, he thinks it is the expression of family spirit as embodied by the clan of the perfume shop owner, Hammerschmidt, that touches audiences. He adds that unlike many romantic comedies, Laszlo's play has, "fine three-dimensional characterizations that give the story more depth."

Pettle's prediction that the play would be a success was correct but neither he nor Robins imagined that it would become a perennial favourite. The show sold out during the last few seasons.

He attributes this positive reception to the talents of the theatre artists who brought the world of *Parfumerie* to life under the leadership of director Morris Panych. "Ken MacDonald, the set designer has created a gorgeous perfume shop with lush details, there are musicians on stage that perform original pieces by composer Mike Roth, there's a sense of entering another era."

Asked what aspect of the play talks to him most, Pettle takes a moment to reflect then says, "The story speaks to me because it is about believing in and finding true love." He then adds, "As a writer, I find that because the lovers come to know one another and are attracted to one another through the written word the story really speaks to me." ■

Parfumerie runs at the Bluma Appel Theatre on various dates starting Dec. 11. www.soulpepper.ca

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A plea for interreligious tolerance from Rabbi Sacks

MARTIN LOCKSHIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth until 2013, has brought his formidable skill and learning to the vexing issue of why inter-group violence takes place and how we can stop it. His most recent book, *Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence*, draws on philosophy, literature, psychology, history and, of course, Jewish texts to provide his "theory of everything" on the subject.

Rabbi Sacks explains that being in a group makes our lives more secure because of in-group altruists – people who are willing to help us even when they get no direct benefit. But the cost is our human tendency to look down on outsiders, which can even lead to "altruistic evil" – destroying the "other" in the belief that such violence benefits our own group. Whatever the costs and benefits of group membership, Rabbi Sacks believes that attempts over history to replace it with universalism or individualism have always failed.

Religion has indeed motivated groups to act violently against others, but so have nationality, ethnicity and ideology. Rabbi Sacks' major targets are anti-Semitism and Islamist jihadism, which arise out of ideology and/or religion, and which dehumanize the out-group. He encourages people to stop seeing the "other" as dangerous and to practise "role reversal – putting yourself in the place of those you despise, or pity, or simply do not understand."

Rabbi Sacks argues for a Jewish approach to group identity and "the other." Judaism combines belief in a universal God – thus parting ways with the ancient polytheists who saw gods as confined to national territories – with belief that not everyone has to be Jewish – thus parting ways with traditional Christians and Muslims, who see their religions as ultimately for all humankind. He believes Jews are thus more able to feel positively toward non-Jews, since we see all humanity as governed by the same God, but we do not feel the need to convert gentiles to Judaism.

Much of the book is a careful reading of the biblical stories about brothers who did not get along, particularly Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau. These characters are often seen as symbolizing the three Abrahamic religions. Rabbi Sacks argues that Genesis teaches that it is difficult for brothers to get along, but it can be done. The fact that one brother of each pair is ultimately chosen to carry on the tradition does not imply a rejection of the other. The moving descriptions of the pain of Ishmael (God hears his cry in Genesis 21:17) and of Esau (whose anguish is described sympathetically in Genesis 27:33-34) teach us to recognize their humanity. In Exodus, two brothers and a sister (Moses, Aaron and Miriam) are able to work in harmony, as the Bible desires.

I found Rabbis Sacks' ideology moving and attractive, but I had problems with some of his methodology. He encourages Jews, when thinking about the characters in Genesis, to study the stories without the later layers of rabbinic interpretation. "In the biblical text itself, Abraham breaks no idol, challenges no polytheist, seeks no disciples." Esau in the biblical text may be tempestuous, but he is not violent, and we easily identify with his pain. Later Jewish tradition taught that Abraham despised polytheism and Esau was murderous. "Esau hates Jacob," the classical rabbis teach (e.g., Rashi's comment to Genesis 33:4), meaning that the descendants of Esau will always hate the Jews. Rabbi Sacks prefers to focus on the biblical narrative itself which, he asserts, is more tolerant.

Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence
by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Schocken

> *I found Rabbi Sacks' ideology moving and attractive, but I had problems with some of his methodology.*

When Rabbi Sacks comes to biblical law, he does the opposite. He acknowledges that biblical laws about destroying the Amalekites or Canaanites appear to be murderously intolerant. But he argues that rabbinic tradition toned them down and essentially read them out of existence. The Canaanites, the rabbis teach, no longer exist. Amalek, Rabbi Sacks says, is now just a metaphor. Rabbi Sacks is correct that many rabbis think this way. But as Robert Eisen has showed in his *The Peace and Violence of Judaism: From the Bible to Modern Zionism* (reviewed in these pages in 2012), it is possible to find both peaceful and violent teachings in all periods of Jewish writing, including in the Bible and classical rabbinic literature.

Rabbi Sacks' cherry-picking of liberal approaches is understandable, even laudable. But he fails to mention that some contemporary rabbis, not just rabbis on the extreme fringe, still promote the less liberal teachings of our tradition.

To give some current examples, the website of Rabbi Shlomo Amar, chief Sephardi rabbi of Israel from 2003 until 2013, promotes the negative understanding of the biblical Esau, including its wider implications. Rabbi Amar quotes the "Esau hates Jacob" proverb, explaining that: "Even in places where anti-Semitism is unknown and it seems that people like Jews, realize that this is simply a lie." Rabbi Amar does not view historical or contemporary Esau as worthy of the compassion that Rabbi Sacks encourages.

Similarly, the chief rabbi of Afula is currently promoting a minor wording change in the Chanukah song, *Maoz Tzur*, praying that God drive Ishmael (Arabs? Muslims?) into perdition. Unlike Rabbi Sacks, some rabbis still teach that Amalek is real.

Sadly, intolerance exists not just among anti-Semites and Islamist jihadists. With the respect that Rabbi Sacks commands, it's disappointing that he didn't devote some of his book to confronting the intolerance of some of our contemporary religious teachers.

Rabbi Sacks fights nobly and eloquently for a tolerant Judaism and a tolerant world. Let us hope that both Jews and gentiles listen to his timely message. ■

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The curse of pop-culture Chanukah

Michael Fraiman

We need to talk about Chanukah movies.

Forget the quiet on-screen marginalization of us every Christmas season – the predictability of never seeing our culture properly represented during the holidays, because, well, there just aren't enough Jews to fill theatres across America.

And forget, even, the overwhelming fetishization of Jewish people in Christmas specials – the moment when funny-sounding Yiddishisms puncture otherwise wholesome family moments with the politically correct realization that not everyone celebrates Christmas, and we must all politely smile when other cultures raise this fact.

No, the question I'd like answered is a much simpler one: Why isn't there at least one decent movie about this holiday?

There are only two true Chanukah movies – *The Hebrew Hammer* (which was hilarious when I was 15 and cringe-worthy on a recent viewing) and Adam Sandler's *Eight Crazy Nights* (summarized by *Rotten Tomatoes* as a "nauseating concoction" with a 12 per cent rating).

Of course, there are a handful of Chanukah mentions in TV specials and made-for-TV movies; some are decent, though most are redundant. The most trite gag involves the obviously-not-Jewish lead pretending to be Jewish for the sake of some potential romantic interest's stuffy Jewish parents. Frasier Crane played this role excellently in the Emmy-winning episode of *Frasier* "Merry Christmas, Mrs. Moskowitz," while lesser attempts, like the Hallmark Channel's *Hitched for the Holidays*, starring rising Canadian talent Emily Hampshire, expand the same joke *Frasier* pulled off in 22 minutes in a belabouring 87.

Inevitably, any Jew who feels like cozying up next to the chanukiyah lights with jelly doughnuts and latkes and some feel-good on-screen amusement ends up watching the 66th episode of *Rugrats*. Either that or a Christmas special. Because, hey, when you want dumb holiday entertainment, you understand that you're the minority, and Hollywood not accurately representing your religion is probably not the biggest problem facing Jewish people today.

But that's part of the problem: our on-screen holiday-era marginalization has become status quo. Jews have had no trouble with on-screen historical or dramatic representation in general – movies and shows generally don't shy away from featuring Jewish characters, and we'll always have *Fiddler* – but, for some reason, holiday specials have eluded us.

> *Why isn't there at least one decent movie about this holiday?*

I don't believe this is because Christmas is too "sacred" a Christian thing – the holiday's slow devolution into generic well-wishes of "Happy Holidays" signifies a willingness by companies and producers to include all religions in one broad stroke.

That's a nice thought, but it sort of misses the point. Jews don't want to erase Christmas specials or the word "Merry" from coffee cups. It would be much nicer to see a bit of our own culture represented in the world without it being a punchline in an episode of *Frasier*.

What I'm asking for is a *Love Actually* for Jews, or even *The Holiday*. Nothing whimsical – just a public reminder that pleasant winter movies can be set against a Jewish backdrop. Or, conversely, as journalist Evan Scott Schwartz has written, the story of the Maccabees has all the right bones for a *300*-meets-*Exodus* biblical Hollywood epic.

Instead, the direction in which we seem to be heading is toward constant bland inclusivity; Seth Rogen's latest picture, *The Night Before*, is a perfect example of an "everyone welcome" holiday movie that takes pains to address Judaism and Christianity in more or less equal measure.

Except I don't want to cozy up in my sofa next to chanukiyah lights with jelly doughnuts and latkes and watch Rogen vomit in the middle of a church. Nor do I (always) want to watch that brilliant *Rugrats* episode for the 38th time, nor do I want to pretend that *Eight Crazy Nights* is worth watching even once.

No, it would be much more comforting if I could turn on the TV and see something I recognized – a Jew neither fetishized, marginalized nor made into a stereotypical punchline, but rather depicted as a human being celebrating a silly holiday in December. ■

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SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Brigitte Zarie's newest album contains a duet with Enrico Macias.

Brigitte Zarie's mother died in 2012, but the Toronto-born jazz singer of Jewish Moroccan heritage said it might as well have been yesterday.

The acute pain of losing her mom, herself a singer, inspired a number of the songs featured on Zarie's upcoming third album, including the title track, *Marie*, sung in French, after which the record is named.

Though her mother often asked Zarie to write a song for her, she said, "I never wrote a song about her when she was alive, I think because she was there, and I was happy. But when she left me, my heart was broken, and it's started speaking to me in melodies," said Zarie, for whom raw emotion, or impulse, has always underpinned her music.

Marie, which is set to be released this winter, is distinct from Zarie's two previous records partly in that it's a duets album. Of the 13 original tracks, six feature her singing one of her songs with another artist, though Zarie said she's been sworn to secrecy about the latter.

The only name she was willing to leak was Enrico Macias, the Jewish, French Pied-noir singer who accompanies her on *Marie* and who Zarie described as "the Tony Bennett of Europe."

His music resonates deeply with the Moroccan Jewish community in Canada, Zarie said, as, "he's from Algeria; his music is the music we grew up with."

Zarie's own parents were Moroccan Jews who met in the music scene in Casablanca – her father a self-taught composer, pianist and horn player who was also a strong inspiration to Zarie and her mother a singer – and Zarie's music is inflected with Moroccan sensibility, with what she called "that unique guitar sound," making it "not so Frank Sinatra, but a little hipper."

Having Macias record with her in her studio in New York, where Zarie has been based for about 20 years, was surreal, as the singer was a staple in her house growing up.

"For the girls I grew up with, he was our Michael Bublé. We all had his CDs and went to his concerts," she said.

Marie, which Zarie recorded over the course of a year or so, is, she said, less "schmaltzy" than her first two albums.

"It's more intimate, less tongue in cheek. The first two were more jazz; this one is more a crossover with a Michael Bublé sound."

Zarie's upbringing makes her an atypical jazz singer: She was raised in a religious home in Toronto and attended the Orthodox school Eitz Chaim.

While Zarie said she may not "look the part," her religious background has had a significant influence on her life and she continues to "do my Shabbat and light my candles," as well as avoiding playing gigs on Friday nights.

Zarie, whose Canadian fan base is strong, hopes to tour here and in Europe in the near future, but noted that, as a singer-songwriter, her main focus is "being in the studio and making sure the songs are written. Once the songs are down, then everything else is cake."

Zarie stressed that all of her music is a tribute to her mother, who, from day one, had an inclination that Zarie would be a success. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 10, 2015

An author's trip 'from diagnosis to survivorship'

CAROLYN BLACKMAN
cblackman@thecjn.ca

In 2013, Aviva Rubin's greatest fear and her greatest dream both came true.

She was diagnosed with marginal zone lymphoma, and was then asked to write about her experiences in the *Globe and Mail*. "I've always worried about cancer; I've always wanted to write for the *Globe*."

Now, Rubin, 56, a local freelance writer and blogger who has two sons, has recently completed *Lost and Found in Lymphomaland*, a memoir about her "trip from diagnosis to survivorship."

With a teaching degree and a master's degree, Rubin worked in various areas of the Ontario government for more than two decades, including her last stint as a senior health policy analyst at the Ministry of Health.

"I was weirdly over-informed when I got my cancer diagnosis," she said.

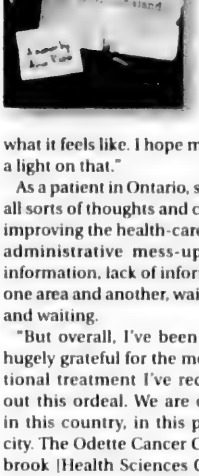
She completed her book about a year after she finished active treatment, although she still receives maintenance chemotherapy, "which is supposed to help stave off the next occurrence. This kind of lymphoma can't be cured, it can only be treated, so it will be back. No one knows when. Aside from a truckload of fear and anxiety, which now follows me everywhere, I'm feeling pretty well."

Reaction to her book, Rubin said, has been wonderful and affirming. "It seems I can make people laugh and cry at the same time. A little levity is a good thing when you're dealing with something as heavy as cancer."

She didn't put a lot of thought to writing about cancer, she said. "I just started blogging right away about everything that was happening. I couldn't help it. It was what I needed to do. All the gory, hard, weird, funny, painful, annoying, boring details. I wanted them out there. A friend suggested I turn it into a book.

"I'm told I capture things that are universal in the experience of cancer – of illness, and of shocking bad things that come along out of nowhere, wreak havoc, and change the course of life forever."

She said that she is often asked if writing about her experience has been cathartic. "Not really. Nothing about cancer changes because you write about it. I feel hugely grateful for the ability to put the hell of this experience out there, and have people tell me I've captured what they're going through. It's hard for folks to understand



what it feels like. I hope my writing shines a light on that."

As a patient in Ontario, she said, "I've got all sorts of thoughts and comments about improving the health-care system – about administrative mess-ups, errors, misinformation, lack of information between one area and another, waiting and waiting and waiting.

"But overall, I've been impressed and hugely grateful for the medical and emotional treatment I've received throughout this ordeal. We are extremely lucky in this country, in this province, in this city. The Odette Cancer Centre at Sunnybrook [Health Sciences Centre] is full of smart, competent, caring and empathetic health-care providers.

"Cancer, however, is a waiting game. It's pretty relentless. When it's not scary waiting, it's boring and tedious waiting. Once you know what you're dealing with, diagnosis and treatment-wise, it does get somewhat easier. I tried not to start the worry mill spinning until 24 hours before any results appointment. Sometimes that worked. I surrounded myself with people who had deep pockets of support and patience for me."

Now that active treatment is done, she said, "things feel somewhat normal – a new normal. I'm back to active hands-on-ish parenting [to her 16- and 12-year-old boys], I'm running occasionally, travelling, having conversations that are not about cancer, enjoying myself, making dinner parties and relaxing, although that's something I've never been good at."

Lymphoma is always in the corner, Rubin said. "Sometimes I can shove it in the basement of my mind and not look at it, kick it back down the steps when it sneaks up. Me and lymphoma, we're in it for life. Finding a way to coexist and respect each other's space is now my greatest challenge." ■

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Comic book hero is an Orthodox Jewish girl

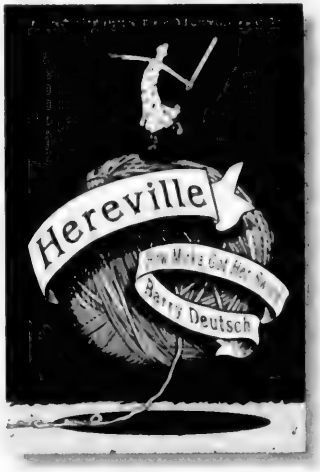
MENACHEM TZVI PERLOW
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When you hear the word "comic books," Spider-Man, Batman and the whole pantheon of superheroes immediately come to mind.

Jews and comic books go hand in hand. Marvel's superheroes were co-created by Stan Lee (Stanley Martin Lieber), and the popular graphic novel *Maus*, written and drawn by Art Spiegelman, was about his father's life during the Holocaust.

But a comic book centred on Judaism is very rare. When it does, it's normally window dressing like *X-Men's* Kitty Pryde lighting a yahrtzeit candle or *Fantastic Four's* The Thing saying the *Shema*, brought up once and rarely mentioned again. And usually their relationship with their religion is as a casual observer, which is kind of becoming cliché.

And that's one of the things that makes *Hereville* so compelling. Written and drawn by Barry Deutsch, *Hereville* is about Mirka, an Orthodox Jewish girl who dreams of fighting trolls and monsters instead of haggling with her annoying stepmother. One day, she comes across a pig – an animal forbidden inside the fictional Jewish land of Hereville – that follows her wherever she goes. When she finally confronts and traps the pig, she incurs the wrath of the pig's owner, an evil witch.



> *Mirka is an Orthodox Jewish girl who dreams of fighting trolls.*

The comic book *Hereville* is written by Barry Deutsch.

But when Mirka rescues both of them, from a group of bullies, the witch rewards Mirka and tells her about a troll who guards a magical sword. But to defeat it, she will need help from her stepmother.

Mirka is a righteous character who shows that you can be religious and still manage to keep your uniqueness. She's a regular, normal girl who reads, saves her brother from bullies, and is sometimes puzzled about the restrictions of Orthodox living (when they show her preparing for Shabbat, they even include a scene where she rips toilet paper into neat little piles.)

So far in the series (there are three books published), we never learn what happened to Mirka's real parents although there is a touching moment where she remembers her mother. Hopefully, the later volumes will reveal what happened. ■

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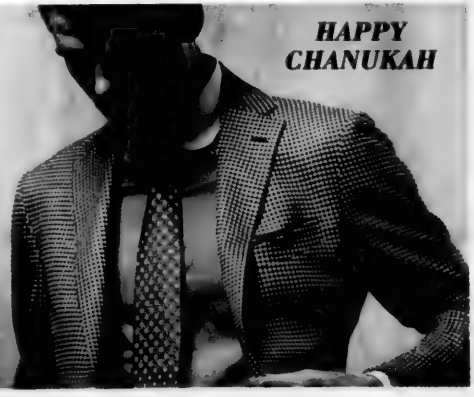

CHANUKAH FOOD

Refresh your Chanukah dessert table

JNS.ORG

It is a truth universally acknowledged that we can never get tired of sufganiyot. But there's no harm in adding some culinary variety to this year's Festival of Lights. Pastry chef Paula Shoyer offer an alternative recipe that is great for Chanukah and will satisfy any sweet tooth.

The recipe is courtesy of Shoyer's *The Holiday Kosher Baker.*

VANILLA DOUGHNUT HOLES

Doughnuts and potato latkes are the most traditional Chanukah foods. Like latkes, doughnuts are best eaten the day they are made, but even on the second day you can get good results by reheating them. To make doughnuts look festive, roll them in coloured sugar.

- ❑ 1/4 oz. dry yeast
- ❑ 1/4 cup warm water
- ❑ 1/2 cup plus 1 tsp. sugar, divided
- ❑ 1/2 cup soy milk
- ❑ 2 tbsp. margarine, at room temperature for at least 15 minutes
- ❑ 1 large egg
- ❑ 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 2¼–2½ cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting
- ❑ 1/2 cup plain or coloured sugar for dusting doughnuts
- ❑ Canola oil for frying

In a large bowl, place the yeast, warm water, and one teaspoon of the sugar and stir. Let the mixture sit for 10 minutes, or until thick.

Add the remaining sugar, soy milk, margarine, egg, vanilla, salt, and 1½ cups flour and mix – either with a wooden spoon or with a dough hook in a stand mixer – on low speed. Add 1/2 cup more flour and mix in. Add 1/4 cup flour and mix in. If the dough remains sticky, add more flour, a tbsp. at a time, until the dough becomes smooth.

Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and let the dough rise for one hour in a warm place. I use a warming drawer on a low setting (about 200), or you can turn your oven on to its lowest setting, place the bowl in the oven, and then turn off the oven.

After one hour, punch down the dough by folding it over a few times and reshaping it into a ball. Re-cover the dough and let it rise for 10 minutes.

Dust a cookie sheet with flour. Sprinkle some flour on the counter or on parchment paper and use a rolling pin to roll the dough out until it's about 1/2-in. thick. Using a small round cookie cutter about 1 to 1½ in. in diameter, cut out small circles very close to each other, and place them on the cookie sheet. Reroll any scraps. Cover the doughnuts with the towel. Place the cookie sheet back in the oven (warm but turned off) or warming drawer. Let the doughnuts rise for 30 minutes.

Heat 1½ in. of oil in a medium saucepan for a few minutes and use a candy thermometer to see when the oil stays between 365 and 375; adjust the flame to keep the oil in that temperature range. Cover a cookie sheet with foil. Place a wire rack on top of the cookie sheet and set it near the stovetop.

When the oil is ready, add the doughnut holes to the oil one at a time, top-side down, putting an edge in first and then sliding in the rest of the doughnut; if you drop the doughnuts into the pan an inch or higher from the oil it can splatter and burn your fingers. You can fry up to eight doughnut holes at a time. Cook for 45-60 seconds. Use tongs or chopsticks to turn the doughnut holes over and cook them another 45-60 seconds, or until golden. Lift with a slotted spoon and place on the wire rack to cool. Repeat with the remaining doughnuts.

Place the sugar in a shallow bowl and roll the doughnut holes in the sugar to coat. Store covered at room temperature for up to one day and reheat to serve. Servings: 50 ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN

Israeli food for local palate

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When one thinks of Israeli food, traditional dishes like hummus, tehina, tabbouleh, and falafel often come to mind.

But the cuisine actually encompasses a wide range of dishes that reflect the many ethnic groups who have settled there over the years, according to restaurateur Michael Solomonov, lead author of *Zahav, a World of Israeli Cooking*.

Zahav represents "a more complete idea of the breadth of Israeli cuisine," Solomonov said in an interview with his business partner and co-author, Steven Cook. Toronto was a stop on their book tour in October.

The two men co-own eight restaurants in Philadelphia. The kosher cookbook is named after Zahav, the partners' first restaurant to specialize in Israeli food.

Solomonov, 38, is an American Israeli with deep roots in both countries. Interspersed with recipes are biographical details of his life and that of his other family members. He was born in Israel to an American mother and Bulgarian father.

When he was a toddler his family moved to Pittsburgh, where his younger brother, David, was born. Twelve years later they all returned to Israel. Solomonov said he was not able to integrate into Israeli society, explaining that he never spoke Hebrew well enough. He went back to the United States and ended up at chef school.

In 2003, on vacation from a sous-chef position, Solomonov went to Israel. He toured the country for three weeks with his brother, who was on leave from the army. Months later David was killed while on patrol near Lebanon.

Solomonov explained that delving into Israeli cuisine helped him feel connected to his late brother. "My interest in Israeli food is a way of keeping my brother's memory alive."

In 2008, he and Cook opened Zahav. The restaurant adheres to the basic laws of kashrut, because that distinguishes Israeli cuisine from that of other Middle Eastern countries, Solomonov said. "Kosher rules help define the boundaries of Israeli cuisine."

He said going back to his Israeli roots has become his culinary mission: "I had to translate this food for the American palate."

Zahav embraces a wide swath of culinary traditions. Along with traditional hummus and tabbouleh, you can find recipes for such Yemenite dishes as lachuch, a spongy, pancake-like bread; schug, a condiment of green chiles; hawaij, a spice blend of turmeric, pepper and cumin; and hilbeh, a fenugreek-based thickener.

The book also includes recipes for Persian food like ghondi, dumplings made of chickpea flour and ground chicken, which Solomonov calls the "Persian cousins of the matzah ball." There's also a recipe for kubbe, an Iraqi-style semolina dumpling filled with ground meat and pine nuts, and Balkan-style borekas, a dish Solomonov's Bulgarian grandmother often made for the family.

When asked if he identified more as an American or an Israeli, Solomonov said: When I'm in Israel, I feel American and in the U.S. I feel the Israeli ties culturally."

Michael Persico photo. Reprinted with permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Green beans and mushrooms with tehina, lentils, and garlic chips

This is our riff on the classic green bean casserole, with tehina standing in for the cream of mushroom soup.

- ❑ kosher salt
- ❑ ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ❑ ¼ cup beluga lentils
- ❑ 2 shallots, one chopped, one thinly sliced
- ❑ ¼ cup tehina
- ❑ ¼ cup cider vinegar
- ❑ pinch black pepper
- ❑ pinch ground fenugreek
- ❑ ¼ cup olive oil
- ❑ 4 cups green beans, trimmed and cut into 1-in. pieces
- ❑ 1½ cups quartered button mushrooms
- ❑ ¼ cup canola oil
- ❑ 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ❑ 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- ❑ 2 tbsp. chopped fresh dill

Bring 2 cups water to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add a pinch of salt, the cinnamon, and lentils. Partially cover and lower the heat to medium. Simmer until the lentils are tender but not mushy, 17 to 20 minutes. Drain and set aside to cool.

Combine the chopped shallot with the tehina, vinegar, black pepper, fenugreek, and a pinch of salt in a food processor and puree. Be careful not to let the tehina overheat – add ice water, 1 tbsp. at a time, if the mixture seizes up. Season with more salt if you like. Set the tehina sauce aside.

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the green beans and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring, until the beans start to soften, about 3 minutes. Add the sliced shallot and the mushrooms to the skillet and continue cooking until the green beans are tender and lightly browned, about 10 minutes more. Transfer to a bowl with a slotted spoon, discarding any excess oil. Set aside and keep warm.

In a small saucepan over high heat, combine the canola oil, garlic, and reserved lentils. Cook, stirring constantly, until the garlic begins to brown and the lentils start to swell, about 7 minutes. When the garlic and lentils are golden brown, drain them onto a plate lined with paper towels and season well with salt.

To assemble, mix the tehina sauce with the green beans and mushrooms and spoon the mixture onto a serving platter. Drizzle with the lemon juice and top with the crispy garlic and lentils, and then the dill. Serves 4 ■

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Zareinu fashion show

Children from Zareinu had their moment on the runway at Zareinu's 12th annual fashion show hosted by Canadian fashion icon Jeanne Beker. YouTube sensation and former Zareinu student, Madison Tevlin, touched the hearts of over 800 guests thanking Zareinu for giving her the gift of speech that enabled her voice to be "heard by millions of people." Guests were inspired by both the children and the professional models showcasing high-end Canadian and international designers, with Ines Di Santo providing the grand finale. The close to $500,000 raised will benefit the children of Zareinu Educational Centre, a school and treatment centre for children with physical and developmental challenges. ■ – *The Socialite*

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What's New

DEC. 10 - DEC. 17

by Lila Sarick

Highest honours

Ekaterina Lotkina, left, an active volunteer with the Jewish Russian Community Centre of Ontario, and Joyce Eklove, a community leader and dedicated president of Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, were recognized with the Ontario Senior Achievement Award, the highest provincial honour for seniors over 65, earlier this month. The women received their awards from Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and Mario Sergio, minister responsible for seniors affairs.

Thursday, Dec. 10

CHANUKAH NASH AND DRASH

Cantors David Edwards and **Jeremy Burko** perform at noon, Beth Emeth Synagogue. $15 (includes lunch). Must RSVP 416-633-3838.

Friday, Dec. 11

CHANUKAH SHABBAT

Temple Kol Ami celebrates Chanukah with a Rock Shabbat, 6:30 p.m. RSVP for potluck dinner to jaykowal@gmail.com.

Saturday, Dec. 12

CHANUKAH FUN

Thornhill Community Shul/Aish Learning Centre holds a Chanukah concert featuring The Skullcaps, 8 p.m. at 949 Clark Ave. W. $18. 905-764-1891, ext. 210.

Temple Sinai holds a Chanukah party, 4:30-6:30 p.m., children up 10 free, prices for adults and older children $15-$20. RSVP 416-487-4161.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Dec. 24 is Dec. 14. There will be no issue Dec. 31. The deadline for the issue of Jan. 7 is Dec. 21. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Beaches Hebrew Institute and Chabad of Danforth-Beaches hold a community menorah lighting at Kew Gardens, followed by a party at the Hebrew Institute, 109 Kenilworth Ave., 6:30 p.m. 416-694-7942.

SHABBAT UNPLUGGED

Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a full day of Shabbat activities, for all ages, Dec. 12.

Sunday, Dec. 6

CHANUKAH FUN II

TanenbaumCHAT (North and South campuses) and Beth Emeth Synagogue present a Chanukah concert, 7 p.m. $10/$15. Tickets, 416-633-3838.

Morris Winchevsky School celebrates Chanukah, 11 a.m. at 918 Bathurst St. with music by **Mitch Smolkin.** 416-789-5502.

MIDRESHET YOM RISHON

Forest Hill Jewish Centre presents learning for women, 10-11:20 a.m. **Sarah Cheses** discusses "From real to ideal: legacy of the Maccabees,"; **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner** will also speak, 446 Spadina Rd.

Tuesday, Dec. 15

LUNCH AND LEARN

National Council of Jewish Women's seniors' lunch and learn program presents singer **Francine Hallman,** in a tribute to Frank Sinatra, noon, Council House, 4700 Bathurst St. $9. RSVP 416-633-5100.

Wednesday, Dec. 16

YOGA

Shaar Shalom Synagogue offers yoga for all levels, 2 p.m. $5./$10.

A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

The Pomegranate Guild for Judaic Textiles meets with curator **Dorion Liebgott** at Beth Tzedec Synagogue's museum, 7:30 p.m., 1700 Bathurst. St. Non-member admission $10, which may be applied to membership fee. More information at Pomegranateguild.ca

JEWISH VIEW OF THE 25TH

Rabbi Yirmiya Milevsky discusses "A Jewish view of the 25th," Congregation B'nai Torah, 8 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 17

BOOK CLUB

Shaar Shalom Synagogue's book club discusses *The Boston Girl*, 1:30 p.m.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Baycrest is looking for volunteers who have special interest or talents to share with clients. Russian-speaking volunteers also needed. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572 or email volunteer@baycrest.org

Circle of Care and Jewish Hospice Programs is looking for volunteers to provide in-home visiting to individuals with a life-threatening illness. A 30-hour training course is provided, Contact **Arnold Foss,** 416-635-2860, ext. 433. or afoss@circleofcare.com

LEAVING ISRAEL

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring discusses "May one leave Israel in a time of war?" Yeshivat Or Chaim, Dec. 25. *Shacharit* at 8:30 a.m.; Shiur at 10:30 a.m. Free, register at www.torontotorah.com/yk.

JEWISH RITUAL IN ART

Rachel Levin discusses "Jewish rituals as depicted in art," Dec. 20 at 7 p.m. at the Lodzer Synagogue. $10.

HUMAN RIGHTS SHABBAT

Martin Klein and **Prof. Howard Adelman** speak at Congregation Darchei Noam as part of Human Rights Shabbat, Dec. 22 at 10 a.m.

YIDDISH CLASS

All levels of Yiddish classes are offered Sundays 10 a.m. to noon, Beth David Synagogue. $150/10 sessions. Starts Jan. 10. 416-635-2883, ext. 5189 or www.committeeforYiddish.com

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CLUB CHAVERUT
Club Chaverut presents "Nine instrumentalists and a vocalist," Dec. 20, 1:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. $7/$10. RSVP **Rose** 905-764-8141.

HEBREW CLASSES
Temple Sinai offers beginners Hebrew class, Jan. 5- March 8, 7:30 p.m. and intermediate Hebrew, Jan. 7- March 17, 7:30 p.m. To register, call 416-487-4161.

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JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call Beth Feffer, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

◗ **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Dec. 17, Big band swing concert and dance with **Lenny Graf and his Platinum Swing Orchestra,** latke lunch 12:30 p.m., concert and dance, 1-2:30 p.m. $15. RSVP 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or lisar@mnjcc.org

◗ **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9; Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.; exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org

◗ **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Dec. 15, lecture on "Anti-Semitism on Canadian University campuses: how bad is it really?" 10 a.m.; Dec. 16, **Myriam Shechter** discusses "The perfect blend: Tchaikovsky and ballet," 1 p.m.; Dec. 17, wellness lecture on "How people with dementia can stay safe while staying active," 1:30 p.m.

◗ **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; creative circle Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., bring your handiwork; Casino Rama, Dec. 16.

◗ **National Council of Jewish Women-Aviva Chapter** is looking for senior women who would like to join, 416-633-5100.

◗ **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860.

◗ **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. 416-256-1892.

◗ **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. **Judi** 416-785-0941.

◗ **Shaar Shalom Synagogue.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.

◗ **Beth Emeth Synagogue.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.

◗ **Temple Har Zion.** Wednesdays, mah-jong at 1 p.m. Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com

◗ **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge, mah-jong and canasta, Thursdays, 1:30-4 p.m. Call **Maureen,** 416-781-3514.

◗ **Beth Sholom Synagogue.** Creative exercise, lunch and cards, Wednesdays at noon. 416-783-6103.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

◗ Yiddish conversation, Mondays, Jan. 11- March 14, 1:30 p.m.

◗ Beginner mah-jong, Wednesdays, Jan. 13 - Feb. 17, 10:30 a.m.

◗ Bridge level 1, Thursdays, Jan. 21 - March 10, 10 a.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

◗ Register for winter programs, Dec. 9, members' registration; Dec. 16, general registration.

◗ Subscribe now to the Toronto Jewish Film Society's 38th season, ext. 139.

◗ Chanukah with PJ Library, Dec. 10, 6 p.m. Live music and storytelling. Toy donations accepted for Drive for Dreidels.

◗ Shabbat family party, free Chanukah open house, Dec. 11, 10 a.m. for children with an adult.

◗ PJ Plus free open house, Dec. 11, 11:15 a.m., for children 18 months- 3 years with an adult.

◗ Chanukah candlelighting in the lobby, Dec. 11 at 3 p.m. and Dec. 14 at 4:30 p.m.

◗ Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Metallic Blues,* with guest speaker **Mark Clamen,** Dec. 13, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Box office opens one hour before screening time.

◗ Why does history matter today? U of T Press authors **Steven Bednarski, Franklin Bialystok and Kenneth Bartlett** discuss how our society has been shaped by important moments in history, Dec. 14, 21 at 1:30 p.m.

◗ From tummies to mummies: free first class for postnatal spin, Mondays at 10:30 a.m. Ext. 567.

◗ Open community choir, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. with **Gillian Stecyk.** No experience or audition required. Email music@mnjcc.org

◗ Everyday Friends: social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Ext. 330.

◗ Choral workshop for opera lovers with **Alvaro Lozano Gutierrez,** Feb. 24-April 12 at 1 p.m. or Feb. 25-April 14, 7:30 p.m.

◗ *Cause for Celebration,* illustrations by **Yaara Eshet,** is on display at the gallery until Jan.3.

◗ Klezmer ensemble, Tuesdays, ongoing 7:30 p.m. with **Eric Stein.** music@mnjcc.org

◗ Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. For programs, ext. 3025.

◗ Beginner mah-jong Tuesdays, Jan. 12- Feb. 16, 10:30 a.m.

◗ Bridge starts Tuesdays, Jan. 26- March 29, 10 a.m.

◗ Healthy U series: "Are there drug-free options for many of our afflictions?" Jan. 16, 7 p.m. ■

SEE YOURSELF HERE

We encourage the community to send us photos for the What's New page.

Photos must be high-resolution and have all the participants identified by name. The best photos are those of people doing something, rather than standing in a line.

wwEmail photos to **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com.**

SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

Where's the beef?

Dr. Michael Gordon

I was sitting in a Toronto coffee shop next to a table with five older women. One of them said to the group, "I am cutting bacon out of my diet – but I do love it once in a while."

"Why are you doing that," one woman asked?

"I just read that bacon and salami and hamburgers can cause cancer – didn't you see the paper yesterday? It's almost as bad as smoking cigarettes – who would have known? I hope it isn't too late because I have bacon at least once a week on the weekends when we go out for breakfast."

It amazes me how, when something is reported in the media, the response ranges from hyperbolic concern by some reporters and the public, to complete lack of concern by others. It can be very hard to decipher the real implications of the many reports that focus on public health threats from the world around us. I have watched as eggs, coffee, various fats and oils, alcohol, different types of exercise and where we live and what we breathe became the focus of notices to the public to either "beware," "take heed," "change practice," or just "stop."

Some public health warnings are immediate, and often due to the finding that some food item poses an immediate threat to consumers. A recent example is the warning and resultant steps taken by the restaurant chain Chipotle, after reports showed that more than 40 people had fallen ill with E. coli food poisoning after eating at Chipotle Mexican Grill restaurants in six different states.

This type of warning is reminiscent of those from public health agencies during barbecue season reminding consumers to barbecue their chicken and hamburgers particularly well because of the risk of E. coli, a ubiquitous bacteria that can be destroyed by proper cooking but may linger in undercooked or rapidly cooked meat where the necessary bacterial-killing inside temperature is not high enough.

These warnings differ from public health warnings about eating habits. Having witnessed the potentially harmful effects of coffee come and go over the years, I was grateful that the final estimation was that when all is said and done, coffee probably has more beneficial effects on health parameters than negative ones. For me, a coffee-lover, it was a true public health blessing; yet, the European Union recently recommended against drinking more than four cups of coffee a day based on caffeine consumption. On the positive flip side, a recent report recommends us to "hold on tight to that cup of joe, because it could save your life," the result of research at the Harvard School of Public Health that says lifelong coffee lovers could be at less risk of dying from Type 2 diabetes, suicide, cardiovascular and neurological diseases.

So what about the bacon, hot dogs, corned beef and pastrami, barbecued steaks and hamburgers? Does everyone who is not a lifelong vegetarian or subscribe to the Mediterranean diet run the risk of sudden death from a BLT or hot dog at their favourite ball game?

A recent study in the United States reveals that 57 per cent of American Jews eat pork in one form or another, but this should not necessarily be interpreted as a sign of anti-religious drift or impending culinary doom.

The final message should be: most things can be eaten in a moderate and balanced fashion, unless there are specific health-related concerns – more important than how often one eats bacon, meat and pastrami, is the portion size and balance with other non-meat foods, including vegetables and fruits. And always cook meat well, especially on the barbecue.

Food is one of the most enjoyable aspects of life, and we should not make ourselves obsessively concerned every time a new "warning" comes out about the dangers of life and what we eat. Hang in there – the recommendation will likely change over time. Take it all in stride – with a dollop of Dijon mustard. ■

Mazel Tov!

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Happy 24th birthday to our wonderful daughter, Jordana. May you succeed in everything you do. Love, Mom & Dad.

Mazel tov to the Steinberg family on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Taheri Koi

Mazel tov! Alivia Dlugopiat is celebrating her 64th birthday! All's family and friends wish her love, continued health and much happiness in the year ahead!

Gillian Fayth Beck was called to the Torah as a bat mitzvah on Oct. 24. Mazel tov from her parents Ali & Mitchell Beck.

Mazel tov to Herman Rapaport, World War II veteran on his 90th birthday, Dec. 11. With much love from his family.

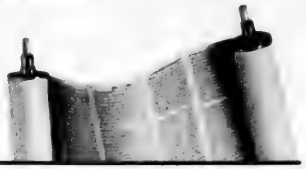
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to [illegible] thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Parshah

Miketz | Genesis 41:1–44:17



Yacov Fruchter offers an alternative look at the effect of Joseph's actions in Egypt
Rabbi Shalom Spira reviews various laws concerning the *Al Hanissim* prayer
Rachael Turkienicz explains why our dreams aren't bound by rationalism

Yacov Fruchter

While there's a tradition of portraying the patriarchs as saints, I enjoy noting their human fallibility. As such, I can't help but be disappointed with Joseph. We're introduced this week to the greatest dreamer of all time. He could interpret his own dreams and those of others, and act on those interpretations. At first, Joseph seems to be a snotty kid who, despite taunting his brothers with his visions of future grandeur, is favoured by his father. Though in my book he loses points for his antics, the way he's treated by his brothers, who debated between leaving him to die in a pit and selling him as a slave, make him an underdog in this story.

Miraculously, and partially strategically, like a phoenix, Joseph ascends from slavery to an unlikely meeting with the king of Egypt. He makes the most of the opportunity, and in one fell swoop, Pharoah names him chief economist and urban planner, and viceroy.

His speech to Pharaoh is inspiring and his recommendation is simple: work hard in the first seven years of abundance "so that the land may not perish in the famine" (41:36). He wants to save Egypt, and he articulates a plan of austerity and collective responsibility during a time of wealth. His grave error, however, is that he fails to teach Pharaoh that saving Egypt can't come at the expense of its citizens' freedom. In the famine's sixth year, when people are starving and the remaining food belongs to the empire, and citizens have nothing else to barter, the boy who was sold into slavery turns Egypt into a nation of indentured servants.

Through great miracles and his messenger Moses, God showed the world that human beings are meant to be free. How disappointing that Joseph was responsible for a plan that made slavery the status quo. The great dreamer made it to the top, but created a nation of uninspired slaves on the way. May the lights of Chanukah be a reminder to each of us of the divine and creative spark within us all that requires nurturing, not oppression. ■

Yacov Fruchter is director of community building and spiritual engagement at Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

"And Benjamin's portion exceeded… by five hands" (Genesis 43:34). The Maggid of Kozhnitz, *Avodat Yisrael*, sees this as an allusion to the *Al Hanissim* prayer, which refers to five "hands."

Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef (*Teshuvot Yabi'a Omer* IX, *Orach Chaim* 66) addresses a related conundrum. It often occurs that a slow-paced individual reciting the silent *Amidah* realizes that his/her only chance to catch *Kedushah* with a speed-reading congregation is by skipping *Al Hanissim*. Should he or she do so?

Rabbi Mordechai Winker, (*Teshuvot Levushei Mordekhai* III, *Orach Chaim* 59), compares this problem to the debate between Ba'al ha-Ma'or and Ramban on Shabbat (ch. 19). In the days of the Talmud, a circumcised baby had to be immediately washed with hot water. (N.B. *Shulchan Arukh Orach Chaim* 331:9 rules that nature has since evolved.) Assuming that a kettle prepared on Friday was lost, could tomorrow's circumcision nevertheless proceed, thereby requiring the baby's family to desecrate the Sabbath by heating up new water?

Ba'al ha-Ma'or answers that we cannot circumcise when we know that it will force us to desecrate the Sabbath right afterward. Ramban argues that we should only focus on the mitzvah presently confronting us, which is circumcision, and afterward we are de facto justified in desecrating the Sabbath for pikuach nefesh. Ergo, claims Rabbi Winkler, Ba'al ha-Ma'or would omit *Al Hanissim* while Ramban would recite it.

Yabi'a Omer is not convinced by either side of Rabbi Winkler's analogy. Perhaps Ba'al ha-Ma'or only meant to be passive, which is inapplicable to a worshipper who is already praying, whereas perhaps Ramban only meant to be proactive regarding circumcision, since failure to be circumcised is punishable by spiritual excision (*karet*), which is inapplicable to *Al Hanissim*. Ultimately, because (*inter alia*) "one who is occupied with a mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah" (Gemara, Sukkah 25a), Yabi'a Omer concludes that *Al Hanissim* be recited. ■

Rabbi Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

This week's parshah, Miketz, is filled with dreams, interpretations and a rags-to-riches story for Joseph, Jacob's favourite son. We're familiar with the Broadway musical story of *Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*. As amazing as that production is, the biblical story is more insightful, entertaining and, yes, colourful.

When we last left our hero, Joseph was sitting in jail and is now a trustee in the prison. Years have gone by, and Joseph is finally recognized for his insight as the "dream solver." Summoned by Pharaoh, Joseph must solve the mystery of Pharaoh's recurring dreams.

Joseph has learned that the power of a dream is not in its content, but rather in its interpretation. Long before, as a young lad, Joseph was the dreamer. He had two dreams that he shared with his brothers, and they interpreted them. As a result, they hated him even more than before. The problem isn't the dreams, it's that he handed them over to these people. He gave away his dreams to brothers, who turned them into weapons against him.

Now, years later, Pharaoh, the most powerful man in the world, cannot break his dream cycle. He is powerless to resolve the dreams and is about to hand them over to Joseph, the least powerful man in the empire. The ones who can solve dreams are the ones with the power. They can peek into our souls.

Dreams aren't bound by the laws of rationalism. The sages say that a dream is a message you send yourself, and it should be read. Yet just as you would not hand over your most intimate email to someone you don't trust, you should likewise not hand over your dreams. The dream has no meaning until it is interpreted. Then it is constrained by the interpretation.

Joseph learned this the hard way. His talent is not in solving dreams but in recognizing that dreams can bring us to our knees, while searching for meaning can elevate us to royalty. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto, rachaelscentre.org.

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Our warmest wishes to all our relatives, friends & clients for a Happy Chanukah

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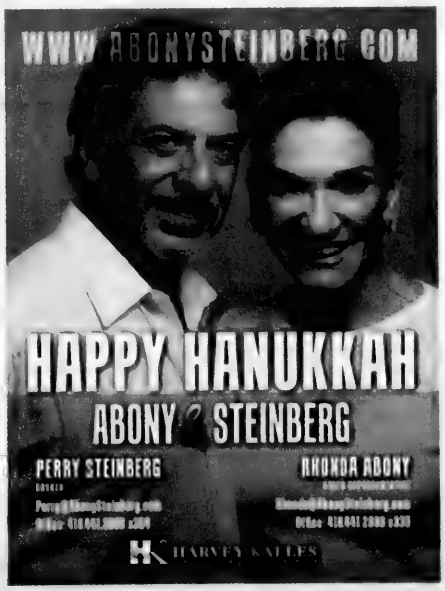

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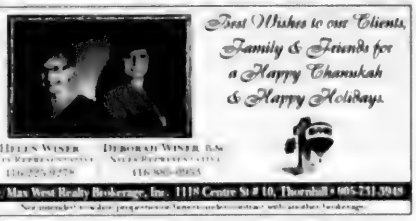
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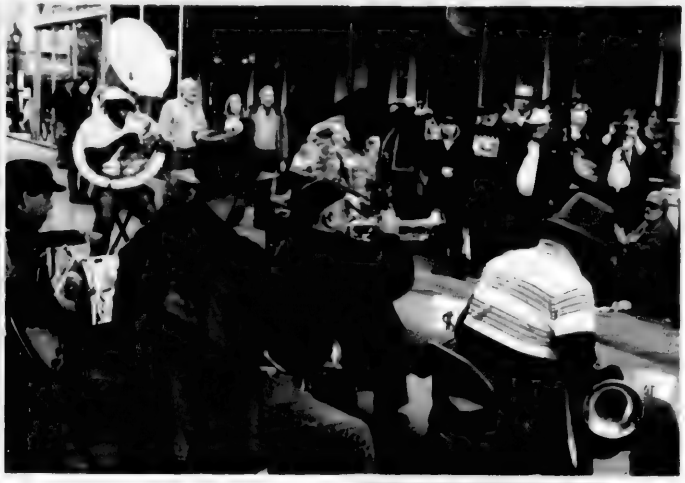


A marching band parades in New Orleans. NANCY WIGSTON PHOTOS

A fresh take on Old New Orleans

NANCY WIGSTON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Back in 1947, New Orleans native son Louis Armstrong hit the pop charts with a nostalgic tune. "Do you know what it means to miss New Orleans?" Armstrong sang in his honey-and-gravel voice. Lots of changes have occurred since then – not least an airport named in Armstrong's honour.

Hurricane Katrina is more than 10 years ago, and today the city has much to boast about. If you're going to New Orleans, prepare to be pleasantly surprised. The "Crescent City" offers both traditional favourites (music, food, festivals) and major new or vastly expanded attractions, making it one of the most popular places in the United States to visit.

Our hotel, International House – the city's first "boutique hotel," in the heart of the Warehouse/Arts District – introduces us to the city's new chic. This neoclassical building began life in 1906 as a beaux arts-style bank. A real dazzler – white columns, soaring ceilings, red velvet lobby chairs, pillar candles, fresh flowers, a West African fertility bench – the hotel pays homage to the city's diverse cultural roots.

During our winter stay, International House was alight with watercolour reproductions based on 1896 designs by the city's first Creole costume-maker, Carlotta Bonnecaze. Her paintings of animals dressed like humans – a peacock, mice, a rat, cats, frogs, dragonflies – capture the "whimsical, curious and ironic" theme of her Carnival floats. Art is everywhere in New Orleans, not least in our hotel.

This serene Canal Street hostelry is just a few blocks from the busy French Quarter. At the Café du Monde (1884) servers deliver platters of beignets and cups of café au lait to the breakfast crowd. Chicory-flavoured coffee scents the morning air; the wide Mississippi River gleams in the morning sun.

Shopkeepers are just opening their doors as we head over to Jackson Square, a New Orleans landmark anchored by the Cabildo, where the 1803 Louisiana Purchase Transfer occurred; inside, a large canvas celebrates the victorious Battle of New Orleans; other exhibits showcase city history, from Native American times to the 1825 visit of the celebrated revolutionary, the Marquis de Lafayette.

On Pirate Alley, a tiny street off Jackson Square, we discover Faulkner House, a National Literary Landmark. In 1925, a young William Faulkner – who'd go on to win the Nobel Prize – rented a room here with an artist friend. When not working on his first novel, *Soldier's Pay*, he caroused with literary pals like Sherwood Anderson and his wife Elizabeth. New Orleans appears in several Faulkner novels, and this being New Orleans, his ghost is said to haunt the yellow house on Pirate Alley.

Much stranger creatures than Faulkner greet us at our next stop, The Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium. Open since 2008, this is a true house of curiosities: the world's largest facility devoted to entomology, with 50 live exhibits featuring an endless array of buggy wonders – Louisiana swamp critters, soon-to-be-butterflies asleep in their cocoons, creepy crawlies of every kind, and finally, the butterfly garden itself, alive with its gorgeous winged inhabitants.

Next stop is New Orleans' astonishing National World War II Museum. Founded in 2000, the museum is another world, it's undergone major expansions and draws enormous crowds to its exhibits, which include a Tom Hanks-produced 4-D film, a 1940s-style cabaret and restaurant, vintage aircraft and military vehicles. Greeted at the entrance to the interactive "Road to Berlin" exhibit by friendly veterans, we board a Union Pacific train – the kind that took American soldiers to basic training camps. (A new "Road to Tokyo" exhibit opens this month.)

> *Come to New Orleans before the Mardi Gras crowds descend.*

Next, history becomes personal, as we choose an electronic dog tag representing "our" soldier, one Joe Diamond from New Jersey. We'll check in with Joe at various stations as he makes his harrowing way through Belgium and Germany as a combat medic.

The road begins in 1942, as the European invasion is being planned in a North African bunker – complete with jeep, howitzer, and sandbags. Battles quickly unfold as we walk through life-like scenes of war: bombed-out towns and villages, snow-covered forests. The road to victory proves noisy and highly dramatic.

Why, we wonder, is America's National World War II museum in New Orleans? Inspired by the passion of Stephen Ambrose (author of *Band of Brothers*), the museum began as the D-Day Museum.

Next we tour the Garden District in the comfort of one of the city's famous streetcars, before perusing the outlet bargains at Riverwalk. Dinner awaits at Antoine's Restaurant, a New Orleans favourite, where everyone feels special. Since 1840, family-run Antoine's has embodied the flair and flavour of New Orleans, offering Spanish, French, Alsatian, and Creole dishes.

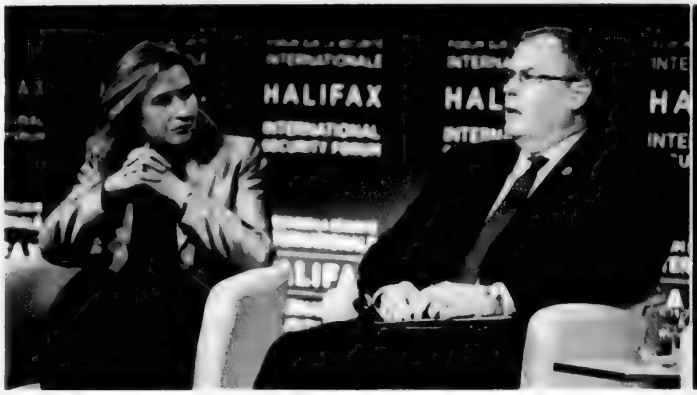
We lose count of the famous faces on the walls and the exact number of dining rooms – naturally there's a haunted hallway – but we are impressed with the cosy nook reserved for Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, whose Make It Happen foundation helps restore the city's Katrina-devastated neighbourhoods.

When our waiter surprises us with a flaming dish of Baked Alaska we too feel like stars, reminded that the Crescent City is synonymous with celebrations, large and small. Come to New Orleans before the Mardi Gras crowds descend, and you'll happen on the excitement of parades that predate the official holiday. One bright February morning, we cheered the clubs and school bands marching along with dancers young and old strutting their stuff. Diving for beads flung from colourful floats, we experienced the timeless magic that is New Orleans. ■

A jazz band plays for tourists in the French Quarter, top, an, above, buskers ply their trade on the river front.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 10, 2015

Tzipi Livni: We must fight, physically, for our values



Tzipi Livni and U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defence Robert Work at the Halifax International Security Forum last month.

From left, Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan, Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak, Livni, and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Jonathan Vance in Halifax.

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT

Tzipi Livni, co-leader of Israel's Zionist Union party and former foreign affairs minister, was in Halifax recently participating in the annual Halifax International Security Forum.

Let's talk about the Islamic State (ISIS), the Paris attack, the Mali hostage incident, the effect of ISIS on the world.

In 2006, the Dutch cartoons of Muhammad created Muslim outrage in Europe, the Middle East and even the world. Today is real. It is not cartoons. It's about who we are and what we believe in. The ISIS threat is about what these extremists in our region want to do, not about what we want. We need to understand what we are facing and then co-operate with our neighbours, with the free world to conquer, to win. It's not just the Middle East. It's all over the world.

How do you combat this threat?

Terrorism has been there for decades and Israeli policies haven't fully resolved it but we have to share our experience fighting terrorism with the rest of the free world. We – us and the free world – have to address different conflicts in a different manner. ISIS is the biggest threat today, and if we don't address it, we'll see more attacks like Paris and Mali. It's clear to me, in this case, that to stop Daesh [ISIS], you must be on the ground. Extremists are willing to pay the price for their beliefs. We have to pay the price for our beliefs, too.

Do you think the conference was a step toward solving this?

> *ISIS is the biggest threat today, and if we don't address it, we'll see more attacks like Paris and Mali.*

The conference happened at a sensitive, almost opportune time, after Paris and Mali. It was a wakeup call to the international community that Daesh is not isolated to the Middle East, but is here and we cannot turn a blind eye. As I said before, we have to fight, physically, for our values. They won't stop until they win. We cannot let them win.

I heard more and more voices here saying, "You're right!" We need to be more bold. Canada's Minister of National Defense [Harjit Sajjan] promised that Canada will be part of any coalition.

Canada has a new prime minister and a new government. There was such great co-operation between former prime minister Stephen Harper and Israel. Do you see changes with Justin Trudeau?

[Smiling] First, I loved his answer when asked about his 50 per cent female cabinet that this is now 2015. I thought that was a great message for Canadians and world leaders.

[Then in a serious tone:] While in Halifax, I met the minister of national defence and Rafael Barak, Israel's ambassador to Canada. The relationship between Israel and Canada is state to state, not necessarily person to person. I believe there has to be, will be, open discussion. There are issues to be discussed, but the basis is there.

Rumours of change [in prime ministerial attitude]? I don't think so. Maybe in tone, but certainly not in substance.

However, the relationship between the leaders of the United States and Israel is not good. In the end, damage has been done and needs to be corrected, but relationships are between the people of the two nations, not necessarily the leaders.

Let's talk about Israel and the Palestinians. Is the world's attitude about Israel changing?

The world sees our strong army against the poor Palestinians. We need to bridge that gap. We have to show Israel's interest as a Jewish democratic state, living in harmony. We need to promote the idea of two states for two peoples. I prefer to reach an agreement, to have legislated borders. That's the only way we'll get support from the international community. But we need to stick to our vision of two democratic states and our interests. We have to show the international community we're serious.

How important is the United States to all of this?

Is the United States the basis for Israel's security? It's not just money and weapons. We want our enemies to know Israel is not isolated. We want them to know the leader of the free world is with us.

If you and your party were running Israel, what would you do differently?

Our vision and our policies differ from the current government. We're all for two states for two peoples. We're willing to take steps to prove it. When it's clear to the world that Israel's leaders are serious, we can have support for the right of Israel to defend itself. And we're all for serious negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. But the thinking of the Palestinians has to change.

There's no hope for peace with Hamas, because they hate us for religious reasons, and that will never change. To them, it's a religious war, just like with Daesh. But we think Fatah can deliver. For example, we want to re-create a committee on incitement and work for cultural peace. We also think empowering the Palestinian economy is in Israel's interest, as long as it doesn't affect our security.

Is there stability among the Israeli people?

Israel is a start-up nation. I'm very proud of it and what we've accomplished in a few short decades. But there's a gap between our understanding of Israel and how the world looks at it. Internally, Israel needs to make decisions. We need a vision. We're a Jewish democratic state that has to live in harmony within Israel and within world Jewry.

I see a shared vision, a shared understanding of what Israel means. By definition, it's a home for every Jew. It is there for you, for any purpose, at any time. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

A labyrinth of deceit

Backstory

EROL ARAF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When the dark storm rose from the banks of the Rhine and settled on Paris 75 years ago, the lights went out in France one by one.

In reality, long before the Nazi Panzers poured in from the Ardennes to reach Paris in 44 days, France had already been morally disarmed by the trauma of World War 1. Indeed, after that war France found herself utterly exhausted: her youth had been decimated, her fertile fields too had been transformed into wastelands, dotted with crumbling trenches and combed with miles of rotting wires crisscrossing gigantic craters.

In spite of all this, at the outbreak of World War II, France enjoyed considerable military superiority over Germany. But Winston Churchill's prayer "Thank God for the French Army" was not answered, as the French military dissolved into thin air before the morally, strategically and tactically superior German onslaught.

A defeat of this magnitude cannot be solely explained in military terms. Indeed, the fall of the Third Republic had its antecedents in a myriad political, ideological and economic conflicts. Accordingly, the French politicians were ready to pay any price and bear any burden to avoid war. The national mood of pessimism and resignation was exacerbated by historical divisions between the secular and the religious, the socialists and the reactionaries, the pro-Nazis and the anti-Nazis, the Dreyfusards and the anti-Dreyfusards, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the republicans and the nostalgic remnants of the ancien régime, the pro-Franco and the anti-Franco, the communist gangs and the fascist Croix de Feu, the Action Francaise and the Jeunesses Patriotes. By the time war was unleashed, France was on the verge of disintegration under the weight of its colossal internal conflicts and culture wars.

What made matters worse for France was the growing British preference for Germany, as the appeasers in London saw the Third Reich as a bulwark against communism. From Stanley Baldwin to Neville Chamberlain, it became increasingly clear in Paris that Britain did not have France's back and that London viewed the Quai d'Orsay, the only reliable democracy on the continent, as a liability, not an ally. The daylight between the two nations of the Entente Cordiale became as wide as the Channel when Britain negotiated the Anglo-German Naval Treaty of 1935 without consulting France and even refused to divulge the full text to Paris.

Things got worse as the French aversion to confrontation started to wear thin under constant Nazi provocations. As Germany commenced to disembowel the Versailles Treaty by sharpening its Teutonic swords – compelling Paris to consider taking action to prevent Berlin from rearming itself – French leaders were met with resolute British opposition. Nothing should interfere, according to Her Majesty's Government, with the London-Berlin Axis, fast becoming the fulcrum upon which, they imagined, "world peace and prosperity" would rest. The *Times*, the official voice of appeasement, went so far as to warn: "In the years that are coming there is more reason to fear for Germany than fear Germany." Hitler's Germany had to be protected from "warmongering" France! No wonder, Chamberlain's sobriquet was Monsieur J'aime Berlin in France!

Eventually, the French, too, succumbed to the blandishments of the Three Monkeys who saw nothing, heard nothing and said nothing. In both Paris and London, silence became the default position. Hitler could not be criticized, the Nazis would not be condemned and dissenting voices, including Churchill's, had to be silenced.

Nowadays, there is a new muzzling zeitgeist haunting the halls of academia and NGO offices, as well as the newsrooms of certain media worldwide, called political correctness, predicated on the prevailing ideological orthodoxy of the extreme left. This is where Orwell meets the Inquisition; where "diversity" means uniformity; where "inclusiveness" means excluding all who do not agree with established dogmas; where "inconvenient truths" are convenient lies; where myths are "settled history;" where perpetrators are "victims;" where those waving the ISIS flag are warmly received and those displaying the flag of Israel are castigated and abused; where criticizing those who call for genocide are "racists;" where unvarnished anti-Semitism metamorphoses into the "human rights" crusade of out time; and, where falsification, outright Goebelesque fabrication and denials are justified to serve "higher truths."

We are lost in a labyrinth of deceit. The Three Monkeys will not lead us out. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Sharlene Lichtenfeld	Nov 22/15	95 Livingstone Avenue
Arlene Marian Turgel	Nov 21/15	94 Durie Lane
Dr. Arthur Fisch	Nov 22/15	188 Old Forest Hill Road
Gert Noble	Nov 25/15	546 Steeles Ave. West
Sima Grinshpon	Nov 23/15	33 Weldrick Road. E.
Carol-Ruth Sahian	Nov 22/15	1201 Steeles Ave. West
Kestutis Augustinas	Nov 19/15	260 Heath Street West
Bess Segalowitz	Nov 20/15	1701 Willowbrook Drive

HEBREW BASIC

Al Bronstein	Nov 23/15	1111 Steeles Ave. West
Hymie Diamond	Nov 25/15	6 Festival Drive

Loretta Pomerantz ל"ז

83, died on 30 November 2015. A Funeral will be Private Family Graveside Service. Beloved wife of the late Leo Pomerantz. Cherished mother of Susan Pomerantz and Steven (Beth) Pomerantz. Loving grandma of Rebecca Pomerantz and Elyse Pomerantz; Sister of Michael (Rosella Zarkin) Bossin and the late Gordon Bossin. Also survived by many loving nieces, nephews, grand nieces and grand nephews; It is suggested that those who wish to further honor the memory of Loretta Pomerantz z.l. may do so by making a contribution to: National Kidney Foundation 1169 Oak Valley Drive Ann Arbor, MI 48108 800-482-1455

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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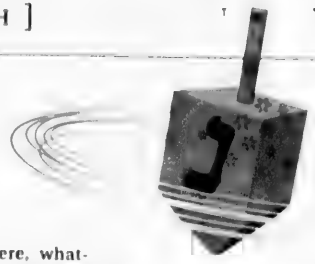
CHANUKAH GREETINGS

The Dreidel: A translation of Sholom Aleichem's story by Curt Leviant. **PAGE 2**
Sabbath: An excerpt from a collection of essays by the late Oliver Sacks. **PAGE 4**
Plus much more

The Dreidel



A story by Sholom Aleichem
TRANSLATED BY CURT LEVIANT

Benny Polkovoy was my best pal. I liked him more than any of my friends in cheder or in town. I adored Benny because he was the best looking, smartest, and cleverest of the boys. He was loyal and generous to me and always took my part. Benny was also the oldest boy in our group as well as the richest boy in cheder.

Benny was a chubby, freckle-faced fellow with yellow prickly hair, bulging white cheeks, gap teeth, popping fisheyes where a shrewd smile always lurked. The minute we met – during my first day in cheder – we became fast friends.

I got my first glimpse of the rebbe when my mother brought me to his cheder.

The rebbe, a man with thick brows and a pointy skullcap, was studying Genesis with all his pupils. Without the slightest hesitation the rebbe told me: "Move to that bench over there – between those two boys."

I squeezed in between the boys and was immediately accepted.

"Remember now, study diligently," Mama said, standing by the door. She turned and looked at me with a feeling of mingled joy, love, and compassion. I understood Mama's look quite well. She was happy that I was studying in the company of respectable children, but her heart ached that she had to part with me.

Sitting there among so many new friends, I must admit I felt happier than my mother. I sized them up; they sized me up. But the rebbe wouldn't let us sit idle for long.

He rocked back and forth and yelled in a loud singsong voice, while we all repeated after him, one outshouting the other. But at one point the rebbe caught me talking to Benny.

He saw that my attention was not focused on Genesis. Suddenly, he began to question me.

"Say, you there, whatever your name is! Do you know whose son Cain was? And what Cain's brother was called? Why are you gaping at me like that?" the rebbe asked. "Didn't you hear me? I'm simply asking you to name the father of Cain the son of Adam and to describe the relationship between Cain and his brother Abel, the sons of Eve."

All the boys were smiling and choking with laughter. I couldn't understand why.

"You silly goose," Benny whispered to me, poking me with his elbow. "Tell him you don't know because we haven't learned it yet."

I obeyed and repeated each word like a parrot. Once again the class exploded with mirth. What are they laughing at? I thought.

Benny and I became good friends. He always stood up for me. Once, when he caught the kids picking on me he took each boy by the ear and gave it a right good twist, chanting with a Torah melody, "Now you know what you'll get for picking on an orphan, a widow's son."

After that the boys never pestered me again.

In cheder I was known as the widow's son. Why the widow's son? Because my mother was a widow. She supported herself by the sweat of her brow, running her own little grocery. I couldn't understand why Mama always complained that she barely made enough to pay for the store rent and for cheder tuition.

"Since God took my wonderful husband from me and left me a lonely young widow, the least I want for you, my son, is to be well-versed in holy lore."

What do you say to that? She always went to my cheder to find out how I was progressing. As for prayers, she made sure that I said them daily. She tried to talk me into becoming at least half the man my father was, may he rest in peace. Whenever she looked at me, she would declare, "You're the image of him, may you live and be well."

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Then her eyes would fill with tears, and a curtain of gloom would cover her face.

No one could say that the Widow's Son was a poor student. I did not even trail my friends by a hair. However, I wasn't as good when it came to praying. All children are alike, and the Widow's Son was no less a scalawag than the others. Like them, I loved to fool around. It was my pal Benny who taught us all sorts of game of chance like odd or even, in which we lost our breakfast and lunch money. At gambling Benny was a master, and he outwitted us all. He beat us down to our last kopeck, then wiped his lips, and pulled a disappearing act.

There was only one week during the year when we were permitted to gamble.

What am I saying permitted? It was a moral obligation, a pious duty to gamble.

That week came during Chanukah, when we played, gambled, and made bets with the dreidel. Of the four letters on the dreidel's four sides, N stands for nothing, G for gather money, H is for half the pot, and S for settle accounts. The dreidel is like a lottery. The lucky one wins. For example, take Benny. No matter how often he spun the dreidel it always landed on G.

"That Benny is really something," the boys said, putting more money in the pot.

> *It was a moral obligation, a pious duty to gamble.*

But Benny didn't care. He was a rich man's son and took them all on. He kept displaying his artistry and skill until he had taken away every last kopeck from us. We all went home, distressed and ashamed. There each of us had to concoct a different lie.

I too had my own cock-and-bull story. I told Mama some fairy tale and got another round of Chanukah money.

With these seven kopecks I went straight to Benny, who relieved me of my money in five minutes flat. And I played with Benny every day until the last day of Chanukah. And then I began to sell everything I owned. My knife, my purse, my buttons. And after every sale I ran to Benny's house, where I lost again. I left his house heartbroken, depressed and vexed. But not at Benny, God forbid. I had nothing against him. Was it Benny's fault that he was lucky at dreidel? Had the dreidel landed on G at my turn, then I would have won.

Actually, I was angry at myself for having squandered so much money – Mama's hard-earned money – and all my possessions besides. I even sold my little siddur, my favourite prayerbook.

Dear children, I grew up and became a young man. Benny too grew up and became a young man with a yellow beard. He developed a big paunch, which he draped with a golden chain. Once he had been a rich man's son; now he was a rich man himself.

We met on a train. I recognized him at once. We embraced and kissed and began recalling good old times.

"Benny, do you remember that Chanukah when you had so much good luck with the dreidel. It always landed on G."

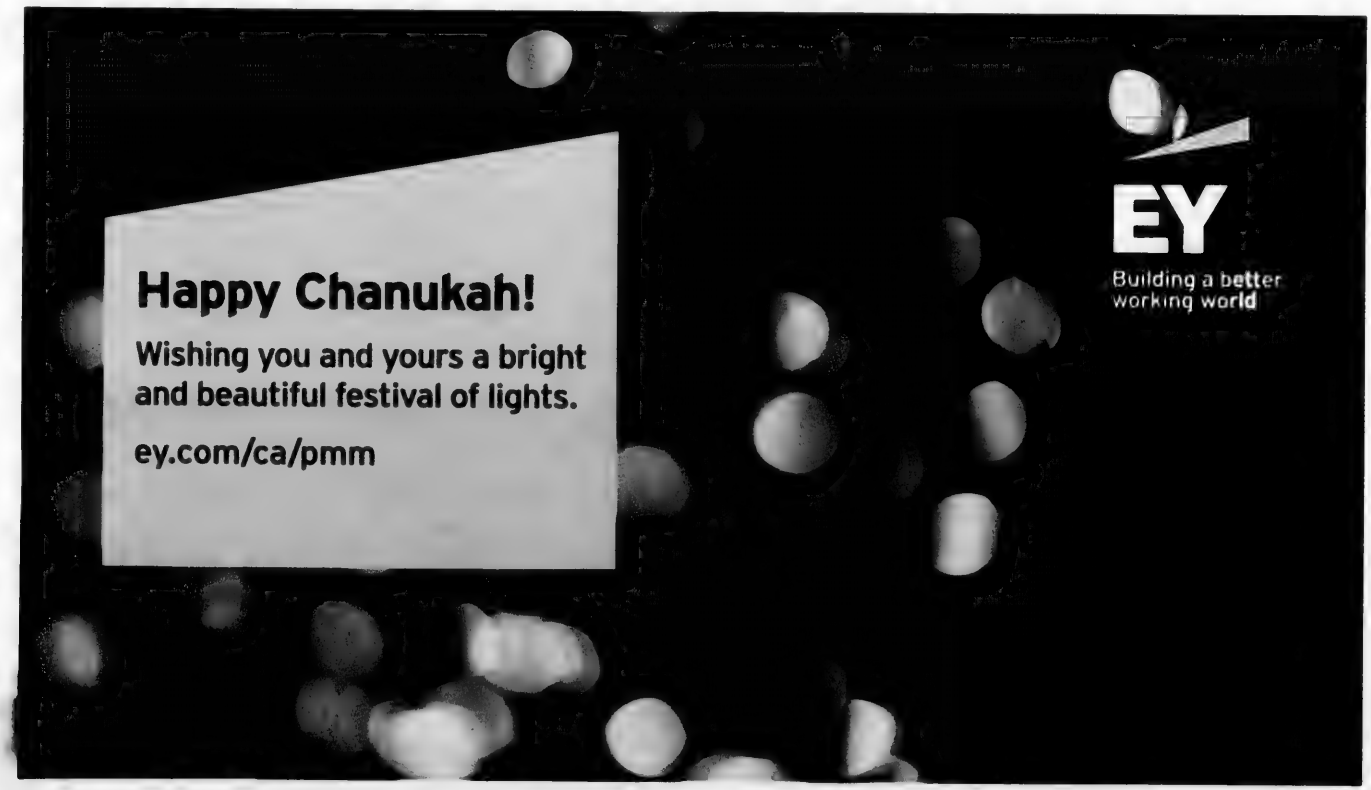
I looked at Benny and saw him turning colours, exploding with laughter.

"What's the matter, Benny? Why the sudden laughter?"

"Oh." He waved his hands. "Don't mention that dreidel. That was some dreidel. Oh, what an amazing dreidel that was. With a dreidel like that it was hard to lose."

"What kind of dreidel was it, Benny?"

"It was a dreidel – ha, ha, ha – with no.... other...letters....only Gs." ■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Sabbath

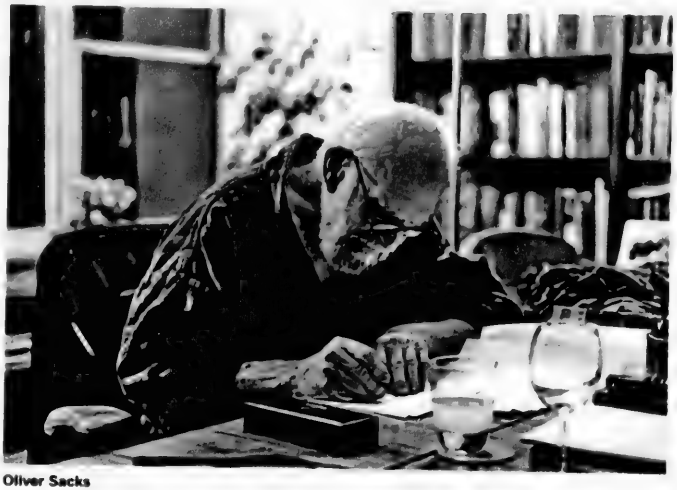
OLIVER SACKS

My mother and her 17 brothers and sisters had an Orthodox upbringing – all photographs of their father show him wearing a yarmulke, and I was told that he woke up if it fell off during the night. My father too came from an Orthodox background. Both my parents were very conscious of the Fourth Commandment ("Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"), and the Sabbath (Shabbos, as we called it in our Litvak way) was entirely different from the rest of the week. No work was allowed, no driving, no use of the telephone; it was forbidden to switch on a light or a stove. Being physicians, my parents made exceptions. They could not take the phone off the hook or completely avoid driving; they had to be available, if necessary, to see patients, or operate, or deliver babies.

We lived in a fairly Orthodox Jewish community in Cricklewood, in Northwest London – the butcher, the baker, the grocer, the greengrocer, the fishmonger, all closed their shops in good time for the Sabbath, and did not open their shutters till Sunday morning. All of them, and all our neighbours, we imagined, were celebrating Shabbos in much the same fashion as we did.

Around midday on Friday, my mother doffed her surgical identity and attire and devoted herself to making gefilte fish and other delicacies for Shabbos. Just before evening fell, she would light the ritual candles, cupping their flames with her hands, and murmuring a prayer. We would all put on clean, fresh Shabbos clothes, and gather for the first meal of the Sabbath, the evening meal. My father would lift his silver wine cup and chant the blessings and the *Kiddush*, and after the meal, he would lead us all in chanting the grace.

On Saturday mornings, my three brothers and I trailed our parents to Cricklewood Synagogue on Walm Lane, a huge shul built in the 1930s to accommodate part of the exodus of Jews from the East End to Cricklewood at that time. The shul was always full during my boyhood, and we all had our assigned seats, the men downstairs, the women – my mother, various aunts and cousins – upstairs; as a little boy, I sometimes waved to them during the service. Though I could not understand the Hebrew in the prayer book, I loved its sound and especially hearing the old medieval prayers sung, led by our wonderfully musical chazzan.



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I did not embrace the ritual duties of a Jewish adult

All of us met and mingled outside the synagogue after the service – and we would usually walk to the house of my Auntie Florrie and her three children to say a *Kiddush*, accompanied by sweet red wine and honey cakes, just enough to stimulate our appetites for lunch. After a cold lunch at home – gefilte fish, poached salmon, beetroot jelly – Saturday afternoons, if not interrupted by emergency medical calls for my parents, would be devoted to family visits. Uncles and aunts and cousins would visit us for tea, or we them; we all lived within walking distance of one another.

• • •

The Second World War decimated our Jewish community in Cricklewood, and the Jewish community in England as a whole was to lose thousands of people in the post-war years. Many Jews, including cousins of mine, emigrated to Israel; others went to Australia, Canada, or the States; my eldest brother, Marcus, went to Australia in 1950. Many of those who stayed assimilated and adopted diluted, attenuated forms of Judaism. Our synagogue, which would be packed to capacity when I was a child, grew emptier by the year.

I chanted my bar mitzvah portion in 1946 to a relatively full synagogue, including several dozen of my relatives, but this, for me, was the end of formal Jewish practice. I did not embrace the ritual duties of a Jewish adult – praying every day, putting on tfillin before prayer each weekday morning – and I gradually became more indifferent to the beliefs and habits of my parents, though there was no particular point of rupture until I was 16. It was then that my father, enquiring into my sexual feelings, compelled me to admit that I liked boys.

"I haven't done anything," I said, "it's just a feeling – but don't tell Ma, she won't be able to take it."

He did tell her, and the next morning she came down with a look of horror on her face, and shrieked at me: "You are an abomination. I wish you had never been born." (She was no doubt thinking of the verse in Leviticus that read, "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: They shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.") The matter was never mentioned again, but her harsh words made me hate religion's capacity for bigotry and cruelty.

After I qualified as a doctor in 1960, I removed myself abruptly from England and what family and community I had there, and went to the New World, where I knew nobody. When I moved to Los Angeles, I found a sort of community among the weight lifters on Muscle Beach, and with my fellow neurology residents at UCLA, but I craved some deeper connection – "meaning" – in my life, and it was the absence of this, I think, that drew me into near-suicidal addiction to amphetamines in the 1960s.

Recovery started, slowly, as I found meaningful work in New York, in a chronic care hospital in the Bronx (the "Mount Carmel" I wrote about in *Awakenings*). I was fascinated by my patients there, cared for them deeply, and felt something of a mission to tell their stories – stories of situations virtually unknown, almost unimaginable, to the general public and, indeed, to many of my colleagues. I had discovered my vocation, and this I pursued doggedly, single-mindedly, with little encouragement from my colleagues. Almost unconsciously, I became a storyteller at a time when medical narrative was almost extinct. This did not dissuade me, for I felt my roots lay in the great neurological case histories of the 19th century (and I was encouraged here by the great Russian neuro-psychologist A. R. Luria). It was a lonely but deeply satisfying, almost monkish existence that I was to lead for many years.

• • •

During the 1990s, I came to know a cousin and contemporary of mine, Robert John Aumann, a man of remarkable appearance with his robust, athletic build and long white beard that made him, even at 60, look like an ancient sage.

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He is a man of great intellectual power but also of great human warmth and tenderness, and deep religious commitment – indeed, "commitment" is one of his favourite words. Although, in his work, he stands for rationality in economics and human affairs, there is no conflict for him between reason and faith.

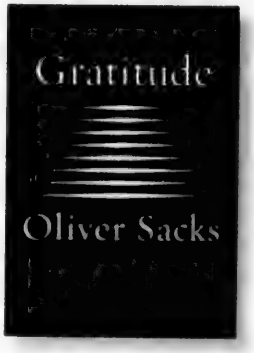
He insisted I have a mezuzah on my door, and brought me one from Israel. "I know you don't believe," he said, "but you should have one anyhow." I didn't argue.

In a remarkable 2004 interview, Robert John spoke of his lifelong work in mathematics and game theory, but also of his family – how he would go skiing and mountaineering with some of his nearly 30 children and grandchildren (a kosher cook, carrying saucepans, would accompany them), and the importance of the Sabbath to him.

"The observance of the Sabbath is extremely beautiful," he said, "and is impossible without being religious. It is not even a question of improving society – it is about improving one's own quality of life."

In December of 2005, Robert John received a Nobel Prize for his 50 years of fundamental work in economics. He was not entirely an easy guest for the Nobel Committee, for he went to Stockholm with his family, including many of those children and grandchildren, and all had to have special kosher plates, utensils, and food, and special formal clothes, with no biblically forbidden admixture of wool and linen.

That same month, I was found to have cancer in one eye, and while I was in the hospital for treatment the following



> *I had felt a little fearful visiting my Orthodox family with my lover, Billy*

month, Robert John visited. He was full of entertaining stories about the Nobel Prize and the ceremony in Stockholm, but made a point of saying that, had he been compelled to travel to Stockholm on a Saturday, he would have refused the prize. His commitment to the Sabbath, its utter peacefulness and remoteness from worldly concerns, would have trumped even a Nobel.

• • •

In 1955, as a 22-year-old, I went to Israel for several months to work on a kibbutz, and though I enjoyed it, I decided not to go again. Even though so many of my cousins had moved there, the politics of the Middle East disturbed me, and I suspected I would be out of place in a deeply religious society. But in the spring of 2014, hearing that my cousin Marjorie – a physician who had been a protégée of my mother's and had worked in the field of medicine till the age of 98 – was nearing death, I phoned her in Jerusalem to say farewell. Her voice was unexpectedly strong and resonant, with an accent very much like my mother's. "I don't intend to die now," she said; "I will be having my 100 birthday on June 18th. Will you come?"

I said, "Yes, of course!" When I hung up, I realized that I had, within a few seconds, reversed a decision of almost 60 years.

It was purely a family visit. I celebrated Marjorie's 100 birthday with her and extended family. I saw two other cousins dear to me in my London days, innumerable second and removed cousins, and, of course, Robert John. I felt embraced by my family in a way I had not known since childhood.

I had felt a little fearful visiting my Orthodox family with my lover, Billy – my mother's words still echoed in my mind – but Billy too was warmly received. How profoundly attitudes had changed, even among the Orthodox, was made clear by Robert John when he invited Billy and me to join him and his family at their opening Sabbath meal.

The peace of the Sabbath, of a stopped world, a time outside time, was palpable, infused everything, and I found myself drenched with a wistfulness, something akin to nostalgia, wondering what if: What if A and B and C had been different? What sort of person might I have been? What sort of a life might I have lived?

In December 2014, I completed my memoir *On the Move* and gave the manuscript to my publisher, not dreaming that days later I would learn I had metastatic cancer, coming from the melanoma I had in my eye nine years earlier. I am glad I was able to complete my memoir without knowing this, and that I had been able, for the first time in my life, to make a full and frank declaration of my sexuality, facing the world openly, with no more guilty secrets locked up inside me.

In February, I felt I had to be equally open about my cancer – and facing death. I was, in fact, in the hospital when my essay on this, *My Own Life*, was published in the *New York Times*. In July I wrote another piece for the paper, *My Periodic Table*, in which the physical cosmos, and the elements I loved, took on lives of their own.

And now, weak, short of breath, my once-firm muscles melted away by cancer, I find my thoughts, increasingly, not on the supernatural or spiritual but on what is meant by living a good and worthwhile life – achieving a sense of peace within oneself. I find my thoughts drifting to the Sabbath, the day of rest, the seventh day of the week, and perhaps the seventh day of one's life as well, when one can feel that one's work is done, and one may, in good conscience, rest. ■

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"If a Jew has a dog..." dogs in Yiddish proverbs

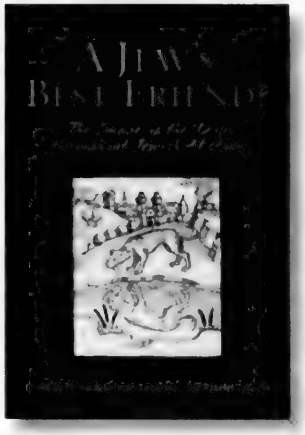
ROBERT A. ROTHSTEIN,
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, AMHERST

Sholem Aleichem's story *Rabtshik*,from his *Stories for Jewish Children* (*Mayses far yidishe kinder*) bears the strange subtitle "A Jewish Dog" ("*A yidisher hunt*"). A Jewish dog? Does the proverb not tell us that "if a Jew has a dog, either the dog is no dog or the Jew is no Jew ("*Az a yid hot a hunt, iz oder der hunt keyn hunt nit oder der yid iz keyn yid nit*")? In truth, Rabtshik is not much of a dog – he does not react aggressively to beatings and other abuse as other dogs do – nor do the Jews into whose courtyard Rabtshik has wandered behave the way Jews are supposed to. In particular they do not honour the principle of *tsar baley-khayim*, the obligation to avoid causing suffering to animals.

Rabtshik is beaten with sticks and stones by adults and children, by Jews and Gentiles; is doused with hot and cold water; and gets neither sympathy nor shared morsel of food from his fellow dogs – neither the urban dogs nor those from the village which he encounters when he runs away from the city. He almost gets eaten by a wolf when he seeks refuge in the forest, and the end of the story finds him lying on a road in the middle of a field, having given up on the world.

It is hard to see why Sholem Aleichem imagined the appropriate audience for this bleak story of cruelty to a dog to be children or why he called Rabtshik "a Jewish dog." One might hazard a guess that Rabtshik was "Jewish" not because he belonged to a Jewish family (which he did not), but because he behaved like a stereotypical East European Jew, seeming to invite abuse and not striking back: He was the kind of dog who "looked you straight in the eye as if to say, 'You want to beat me? Go ahead and do it.'" ("*...kukt aykh glaykh in di oygn, vi eyner zogt: Na! Vilst mikh shlogn? – Shlog!*")

One such beating leaves Rabtshik with a broken leg, a sad instance of a traditional Yiddish riddle that is based on a Hebrew pun. "When does a dog have a holiday?" asks the riddle, and the answer is, "When he gets his leg broken" ("*Ven iz bay a hunt yontef? – az men tsebrekht im a fus.*"). The explanation is that a dog with a broken leg is reduced to walking on three legs. "Three legs" in Hebrew is *shalosh regalim*, but the same phrase is used in the Bible to mean "three times"—cf. the commandment in Exodus 23:14-16 to observe festivals "three times (a year)," namely Passover, Shevues (Shavuot), and Sukkot (Sukkot). In Mishnaic Hebrew, *shalosh regalim* came to refer to those three holidays—thus a dog that with three (good) legs would seem to have at the same time three holidays.



Yiddish has a rich stock of proverbs and related constructions (proverbial expressions, riddles, omens and apotropaic [evil-averting] formulas (Yiddish, "*simonim un zgules*")). In Yiddish, as in other languages, such paremias usually make metaphorical use of concrete imagery to make a more general and/or abstract point. Consider, for example, the proverb "When one wants to strike a dog, one finds a stick" ("*Az men vil a hunt a zets gebn, gefint men a shtekn*"). This proverb could be understood literally, but the more common figurative reading is that when one is determined to do something, one will find the means. The Yiddish proverb has counterparts in other European languages: the Polish version, for example, was first attested in 1558 ("Latwie kij najdzie, kto chce psa bic,"or in more modern Polish: Kto chce psa uderzyc, ten kij znajdzie"); and Sir Francis Bacon used an English version in 1593 ("He who has a mind to beat a dog will easily find a stick").

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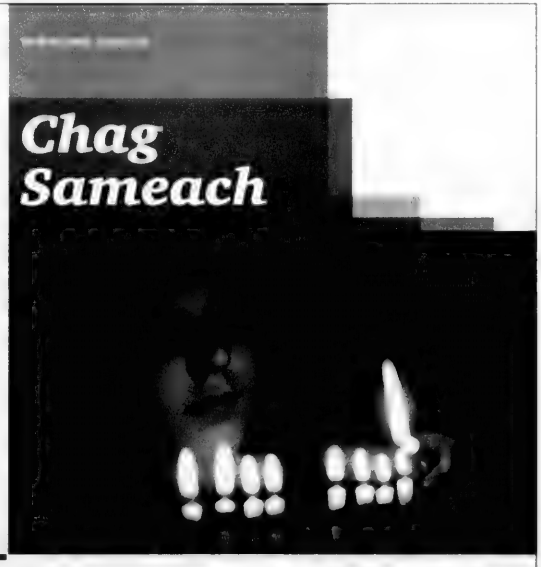

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Dogs and sticks also figure in a proverb that recommends avoiding painful reminders: "One should not show a stick to a beaten dog" (*"Far a geshlogenem hunt tor men keyn shtekn nit wayzn"*) – though there is also a corresponding proverb which does not refer to dogs: "One should not mention a rope to someone whose family member has been hanged" (*"Ver es hot a gehongenem in der mishpokhe, far dem tor men keyn shtrik nit dermanen"*). The second of these has international parallels, but the Polish analog of the first makes a different point. "Bitemu psu tylko kij ukazac" means that "it is enough to show a beaten dog a stick" – that is, a painful reminder can be useful. The Yiddish expression "a beaten dog" (*"geshlogener hunt"*) may apply figuratively to a person in at least two related senses: an experienced person (particularly one who has experienced suffering), and a person who is sly or wily.

In another proverb the dog is literal but the stick-throwing is figurative: "Wherever one throws a stick, one finds a dog" (*"Vu men git a vorf a shtekn, gefint men a hunt"*), which can mean that there are lots of dogs around – or that bad people are to be found everywhere. Sometimes, however, the stick is literal, not figurative. The proverbial expression "a verse with a stick" (*"a posek mit a shtekn"*) suggests that a cautious person should carry a stick just in case the biblical verse that is supposed to protect Jews against dogs fails to work. The intended verse is Exodus 11:7: "But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog whet his tongue…" Likewise, an anecdote about two Jewish pedlars in a Polish village who want to offer their wares to a Polish homeowner alludes to the same verse. When the pedlars enter the courtyard, one of them is attacked by a large dog. The other yells to him to recite the verse, but his colleague answers that the dog did not leave him enough time to do so (*"Der hunt lozt mikh tsum posek nit kumen"*). His answer has become proverbial.

Beyond the biblical verse and the stick, there are other traditional ways to protect oneself from a threatening dog. Some Jews believed that a dog would run away if one shows it a "fig" (a *"fayg"*–the gesture consisting of a closed fist with the thumb sticking out between the index and middle fingers) or one makes the "fig" with one's hand in one's pocket. One might have to accompany the gesture with the incantation "Death or life,/As God grants" (*"Toyt oder lebn,/vi Got vet gebn"*). Or the "fig" might not even be necessary if one says three times:

Hunt, hunt,/farmakh dayn bunt.
Ikh bin Yankevs,/du bist Eysevs.
Du vest mikh baysn,/veln di velf dikh tseraysn

Dog, dog,/Close your mouth.
I am Jacob's,/You are Esau's.
If you bite me,/The wolves will tear you apart

On the other hand, small children do not have to worry about dogs – since, according to popular belief, "No dog will attack small children" (*"Kleyne kinder falt keyn hunt nit on"*).

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> *One should not show a stick to a beaten dog.*

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Dogs bark, of course, and although "not everyone at whom dogs bark is a thief" (*"Nit yederer af vemen hint biln iz a ganef"*), still, "a dog does not bark at itself" (*"A hunt bilt nit af zikh aleyn"*) – in other words, where there's smoke, there's fire, and "when a dog barks, one should go out and take a look" (*"Az a hunt bilt, zol men aroysgeyn zen"*). After all, dogs bark at strangers – and there might be a thief in the neighbourhood. Alternatively, "[When] dogs bark, [it means that] in-laws are coming [to visit]" (*"Hint biln–mekhutonim forn"*). In any case, "When the dog has had enough of barking, it will stop by itself" (*"Az der hunt hot zikh oysgebilt, hert er aleyn uf"*).

Yet sometimes one can simply ignore the barking; the Yiddish version of the internationally-known proverb that "a barking dog does not bite" is *"A hunt vos bilt, bayst nit."* In Yiddish and in other languages, the proverb is often used figuratively to characterize a verbally aggressive person who makes threats but does not carry them out. Yet the simple meaning of the proverb is challenged in an anecdote in which a Jew visiting a Pole in a village is afraid to enter his garden because there is a dog barking fiercely on the other side of the fence. The Pole tries to reassure him by reminding him of the proverb. "I certainly know that rule," says the Jew, "but how do I know that the dog does too?" (*"Avade veys ikh dem dozikn klal! Nor fun vanen veys ikh, az der kelev veyst dos oykh?"*).

The image of someone ignoring a barking dog appears in two Yiddish proverbial expressions that can be used to suggest that one should ignore criticism – or that someone is too insignificant to be listened to. The first has two versions: "One lets a dog bark and continues on his way" (*"A hunt lozt men biln, un men geyt zayn veg"*); and "The dog barks, and the landowner travels on" (*"Der hunt bilt, un der porets fort"*). The second has a Polish cognate first attested in 1671: *"Pies szczeka, a dworzanin jedzie"* – and other Polish versions say that "The dog barks, but the caravan travels on." The version with the caravan exists in a rhyming Turkish proverb ("it ürür kervan yürür"), which dates from at least the early 17th century. The proverb also exists in English – in Chapter 38 of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* Rhett Butler asks Scarlett O'Hara, "Did you ever hear the Oriental proverb: 'The dogs bark but the caravan passes on?' Let them bark, Scarlett. I fear nothing will stop your caravan."

As we have seen, Yiddish proverbs that mention dogs are usually about humans and not about dogs. Sometimes there is an explicit comparison, e.g., "A cantor in his old age," says one proverb, "barks like a dog and eats like a pig" (*"A khazn af der elter bilt vi a hunt un frest vi a khazer"*). The verb *untershlogn* means "to line (a garment)," but someone said to be *"untergeshlogn mit hunt"* (literally, "lined with dog [fur]") is a bad person, and a proverb plays on the literal and idiomatic meanings by suggesting that "If one is himself lined with dog fur, he does not need a fur coat" (*"Az men iz aleyn untergeshlogn mit hunt, bedarf men keyn pelts nit"*). A dog can even serve as a standard of negativity: "A false friend is worse than a dog" (*"A falsher fraynd iz erger vi a hund"*). This negative depiction of dogs is also maintained in some of the few proverbs that actually are about dogs – for example, "From a dog one cannot even make a good fur coat" (*"Fun a hunt ken men afile keyn gutn pelts nit makhn"*) or "There is no such thing as a good dog" (*"Es iz nit keyn guter hunt"*).

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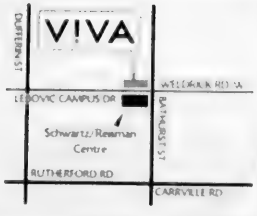

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The image of a dog is used to express a less-than-welcoming attitude toward in-laws in such proverbs as: "A *mekhutn* (a son- or daughter-in-law's father) should not be a dog (i.e., a bad person)" ("*A mekhutn tor keyn hunt nit zayn*") , and "A son or a daughter is a child; a daughter-in-law is a sore (a wound); a son-in-law is a dog" ("*A zun un a tokhter zint a kind; a shnur iz a vund; an eydem iz a hunt*" – which exhibits multiple rhymes in the Central Yiddish dialect: "*A zin in a tokhter zint a kint; a shnir iz a vint; an aydem iz a hint*"). Another Yiddish proverb, presumably expressing the negative attitude of the bride's parents to their new son-in-law, parodies a comparison from a medieval rabbinic text (Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer), which says that "a bridegroom is like a king" (in its Ashkenazi version: "*Khosn doyme lemeylekh*"); the parody tells us that a bridegroom is like a dog. ("*Khosn doyme lekelev*") "A merchant should not be a dog," says another proverb, "and a dog certainly should not be a merchant" ("*A soykher tor keyn hunt nit zayn, un a hunt a soykher avade nit*"). In effect, "*hunt*" (dog) is the antonym of "mensch" (man, in the sense of "decent human being").

There is little hope for a bad person: "A dog remains a dog" ("*A hunt blaybt a hunt*"), although he is advised not to add the further sin of avarice: "If you are already a dog, at least do not be a pig" ("*Bistu shoyn a hunt, zay zhe khotshe keyn khazer nit*"). Figuratively, there are degrees of being a dog: one can be described in a mixed Yiddish-Hebrew formula as "a dog of dogs" ("*hunt-shebehint*") or in its purely Hebrew version (also used in Yiddish) as "*kelev-she-be-kelavim*". Combining the Germanic and Semitic words for "dog" produces a stronger effect than either alone: "*a hunt a kelev*" is a very negative way to describe a person. In an anecdote, a wife adds a third term when one of her husband's friends comes to tell her that he has died while playing cards. Having been instructed to approach the matter tactfully, the messenger begins by telling her that her husband had lost money while playing cards (that is, leaving off the fact that he died). The vignette reaches a comic climax when she responds with, "May he croak, the dog," building a crescendo of abuse by adding the Russian word for "dog" to the Yiddish and Hebrew ones: "*Peygern zol er, der hunt, der kelev, der sabake!*" If you prefer to be indirect, you can call someone a "fifty-second" ("*Er iz a tsvey-un-fufts-iker*")–from the sum of the numerical values of the Hebrew letters in *kelev*, 40+10+2.

"All dogs look alike," says another proverb, "and so do all Russians" ("*Ale hint un ale yevonim hobn eyn ponim*");

> *If you are already a dog, at least do not be a pig.*

an anticlerical version adds "all rabbis" ("*un ale rabonim*") to the list of those who, literally translated, "have one face." (*Yevonim* originally referred to Greeks, but later came to mean "Russians" or "Russian soldiers" or even "policemen.")

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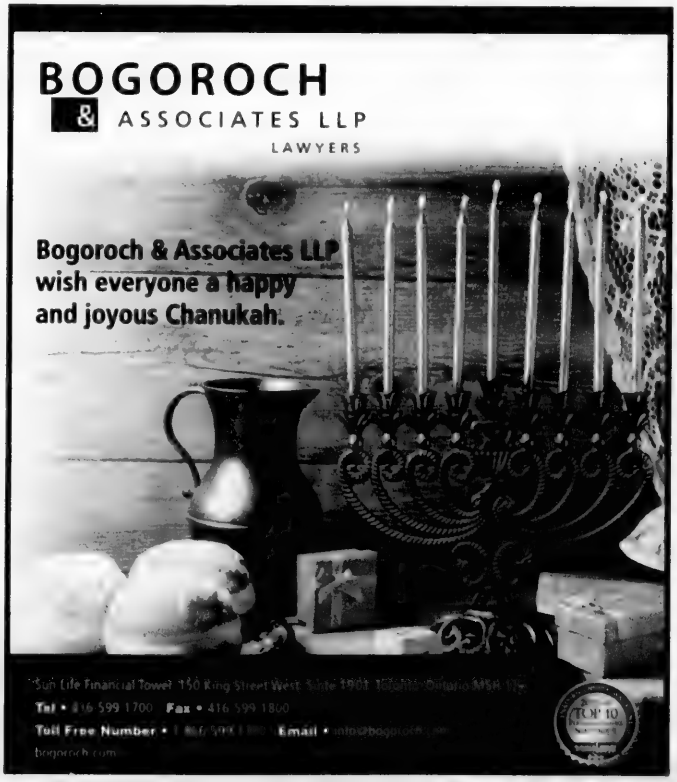
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Needless to say, this is not complimentary to dogs or to Russians – or to rabbis. Another characteristic of dogs is that they have fleas, and Yiddish has a version of the internationally known proverb that uses the metaphor of dogs and fleas to advise against associating with disreputable characters: "If you lie down with dogs, you will get up with fleas" ("*Ver es leygt zikh mit a hunt shlofn, shteyt uf mit fley*"). The proverb is first attested in English in 1573, and has a Latin antecedent: *Qui cum canibus concumbunt cum pulicibus surgent.*

Dogs stand in for humans in other proverbs as well. "If you let a dog get up on the bench, he will jump onto the table" ("*Loz a hunt af der bank, shpringt er afn tish*") and its synonymous proverb "If you show a dog a finger, he will want the whole hand" ("*Vayz a hunt a finger, vil er di gantse hant*") are equivalent to the English "Give him a finger and he will take an arm." All are warnings about being too generous or too willing to help. On the other hand, one needs to be careful about a helper who is not a disinterested party: "One does not send a dog into a butcher shop" ("*A hunt shikt men nit in yatke arayn*") or its equivalent: "One does not send a cat for butter or a dog for meat" ("*A kats shikt men nit nokh puter un a hunt nokh fleysh*"). Yet another version: "Just as a dog cannot be a butcher, so too an unmarried young man cannot be a matchmaker" ("*Vi a hunt ken keyn katsev nit zayn, azoy ken a bokher keyn shadkhn nit zayn*"). This would be equivalent to what the English proverbial expression calls "letting the fox guard the chicken coop." A Yiddish equivalent of "When the cat is away, the mice will play" is "When the butcher goes away, the dog jumps onto the butcher's block" ("*Az der katsev geyt avek, shpringt der hunt afn klots*"). To comment on a person who meddles in matters that are none of his or her business, one can say, "Yes, a wedding, but what is the dog doing there?" ("*Yo, a khasene–vi kumt ober der hunt dertsu?*").

Occasionally, a dog serves as a convenient straw man to describe human behaviour. A dog is mentioned in the proverb "Only a dog [unlike a person] has no debts" ("*Nor a hunt hot keyn khoyves nit*"). Cows and horses have no debts either, but the proverb choses a negative representative of the animal kingdom as a counterpoint to the fallible human. A person described as looking at someone "like a dog at its father" ("*Er kukt af im vi a hunt afn tatn*") has a dumbfounded look of astonishment since, as the Yiddish lexicographer Nahum Stutchkoff explained, a dog typically does not know his father ("his mother the bitch did not marry him under a wedding canopy" ("*Keyn khupe hot di mame zayne di klafte mit im nisht geshtelt*") and would be surprised to be introduced to him. Once again, dogs are not the only animals that do not typically live in nuclear families, but perhaps the subtext here is an implied misogynistic analogy based on the stereotypical promiscuity of female dogs.

The dog is also a straw man in a proverb that comes from an anecdote about a Jew and a dog. A landlord has ordered one of his Jewish tenants to teach the landlord's dog to speak Polish. The Jew agrees, but says that it will take a long time, perhaps 10 years. The landlord is willing to wait.

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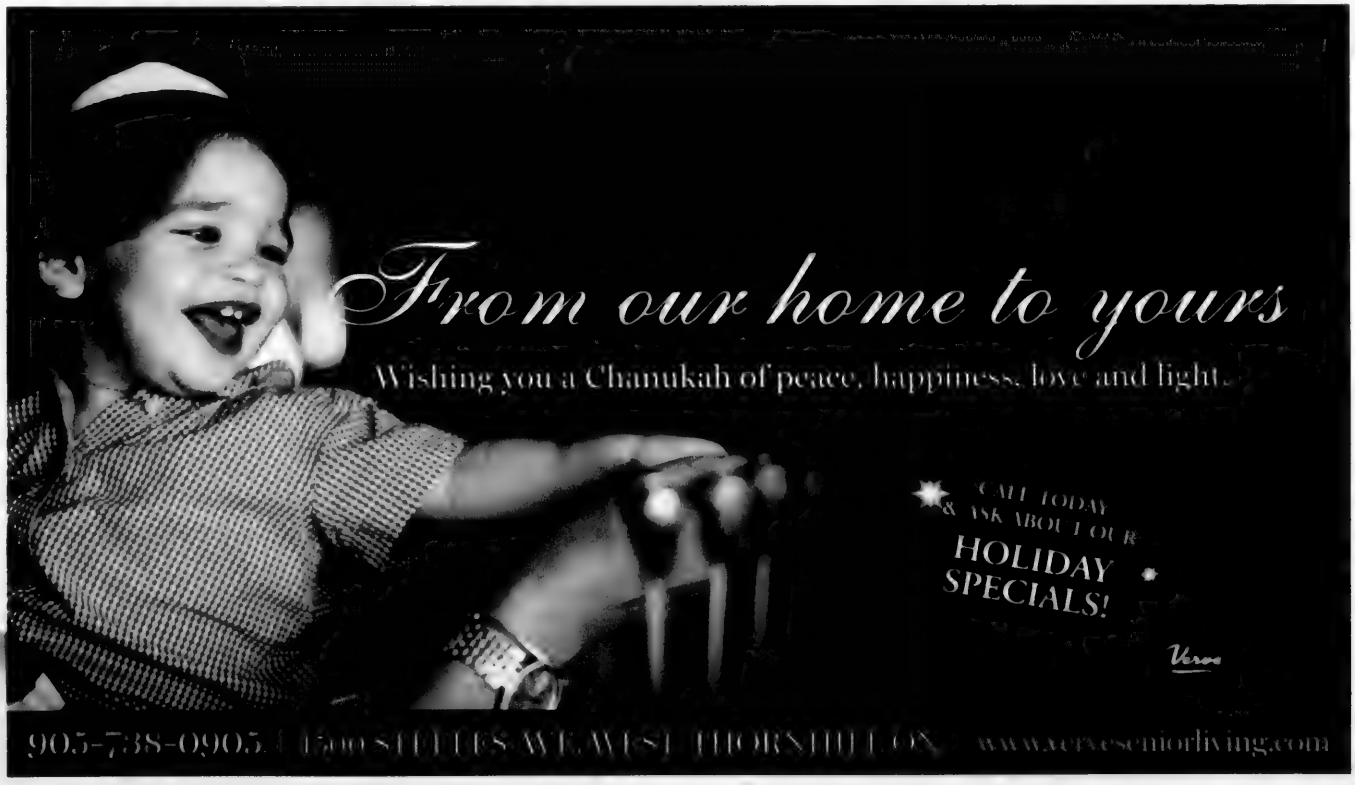
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When one of the Jew's friends asks him how he could agree to take on such an impossible task, the first Jew replies that in 10 years "Either the landlord will croak (that is, die), or the dog will croak" (*"Oder der porets vet peygern, oder der hunt vet peygern"*).

Jews did recognize some positive qualities in dogs, such as their loyalty: "A wife is like a dog in the house" (*A vayb iz vi a hunt in shtub*), i.e., she is loyal and protects the home. (Notice that this suggests either that Jews occasionally allowed dogs into their homes, or, more likely, that they were familiar with this practice among non-Jews.) A more elaborate version of this comparison says that "The first wife is like a dog, the second is like a cat and the third, like a pig" (*Dos ershte vayb iz vi a hunt, dos tsveyte iz vi a kats un dos drite vi a khazer*), in other words, the first wife is loyal, the second is false and the third is greedy.

One proverb suggests a useful role for dogs: "If there is a dog and a potter in a town, one does not need a rabbi" (*"Az men hot a hunt un a teper in shtot, darf men keyn rov nit hobn"*). The explanation is that a rabbi is needed only to answer questions concerning kashrut. If there is some doubt about the kosher status of a piece of meat, the dog can eat it; and if there is some doubt about a dish or a cooking vessel, the potter can make a new one. So a dog can help one avoid the sin of eating non-kosher food. A positive (and even kind) attitude toward dogs is reflected in the Yiddish version of an internationally known proverbial expression about terrible weather: "It's a sin to drive a dog out (in such weather)" (*"Es iz an aveyre, a hunt aroystsutraybn"*).

Although most Yiddish proverbs that mention dogs are not really about dogs, dogs do play a role in some proverbial omens (Yiddish, *"zgules"*), e.g., "When a dog howls, someone has died" (*"Az a hunt vuyet, iz eyner geshtorbn"*). This is a paraphrase of part of a Talmudic citation: "When dogs howl, this is a sign that the Angel of Death is in the town. When dogs frolic (literally, "are happy"), (this is a sign that) Elijah the Prophet is in the town. (*"Ven es voyen hint, iz a simen, az der malekh-hamoves iz in shtot. Az hint zaynen freylekh, iz Elyohu hanovi in shtot"*). Here we see dogs serving an unusual, mystical function—announcing death on the one hand, and the possibility of redemption on the other. Elijah, after all, is supposed to announce the coming of the Messiah.

From the available evidence from proverbs and other literary sources, we can conclude that dogs were part of the Jewish environment in Eastern Europe, but they were not part of the family. If a neighbourhood dog was familiar enough to be given a name, it was typically a Slavic name, not a Jewish one. The dogs in the Sholem Aleichem story with which we began all have such names: Rabtshik, Tsutsik, Rudek, Zhuk, Sirko. There is also a Sirko in Sholem Aleichem's autobiographical novel *From the Fair* (*Funem yarid*), whom the children address in Ukrainian – since, as the author points out, "one naturally speaks with a dog in the (local) Gentile language (*af goyish*)." Yiddish proverbs about dogs – with some few exceptions – portray a generally negative image. A dog – or a person who can be compared to a dog – is to be disdained or feared: "If you are likely to meet a dog, you should take a stick along to defend yourself (in case the protective biblical formula does not work)". The same attitude is reflected in an American Jewish anecdote about a Jew who had long ago converted to Christianity. He confides to a friend that in some ways he still feels Jewish: "Every day I read *the New York Times*, every Sunday I have a pastrami sandwich, and I'm still afraid of dogs." ■

SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTOS

Excerpted from A Jew's Best Friend? The Image of the Dog Throughout Jewish History, edited by Phillip Ackerman-Lieberman and Rakefet Zalashik. Published by Sussex Academic Press. For more information, visit www.sussex-academic.com

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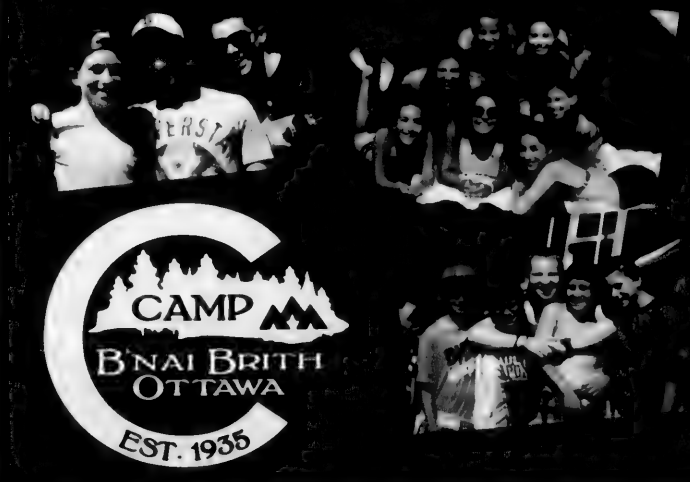

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In vitro, if you can

Children had not really been on the agenda during my brief first marriage. For many years afterwards, to the extent that I even allowed myself to dream about a better future, I was hoping more for an enduring, loving relationship than for marriage and a baby carriage. But meeting Lisa in Israel was the best thing that happened to me. So the idea of creating a family with her didn't terrify me; whatever my neuroses were, they were not going to dominate my life. We were mature, level-headed, conscientious adults. Given my history, I approached the idea of kids as an awesome responsibility, but one that we were ready for.

Yet three years into our marriage, we were not getting pregnant. Lisa was in her late 30s, so maybe age was a contributing factor. Tests showed I had poor sperm motility. Still, hadn't doctors time and again overcome just such hurdles? And so, with composed optimism, we began treatment – breaking away from our respective offices to keep appointments at Jerusalem's Hadassah Medical Center IVF clinic on Mount Scopus. We started out hopefully enough with the standard medical and social intake assessments. Next came exams, lab tests, ultrasonography, and referrals to outside consultants, including endocrinologists and urologists.

Lisa had to take potent hormonal drugs and undergo repeated surgical procedures, which necessitated mild anesthesia, to reimplant her eggs, which had been fertilized by my sperm in a test tube. My role was simply to relive the inglorious moments of my adolescence, girlie magazine in hand – only this time under doctor's orders. But the eggs that were fertilized in the lab and inserted into Lisa's uterus didn't take hold, for reasons that never became quite clear. Was it just bad luck? Were Lisa's eggs too frail? Did my sperm have a built-in self-destruct mechanism?

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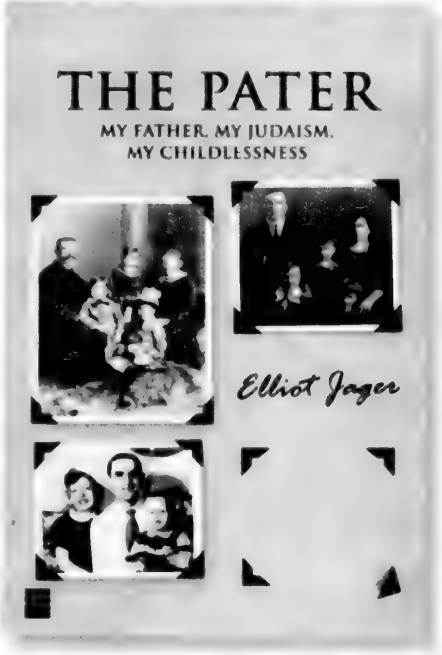

> *Was it just bad luck? Were Lisa's eggs too frail? Did my sperm have a built in self destruct mechanism?*

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I couldn't help thinking back to my years at the New York City Health Department, where one of my jobs had involved working with a device that utilized a radioactive particle to detect lead in the homes of children diagnosed with lead poisoning. Employees had been repeatedly assured the machine was safe. Still, I wondered.

After each failed round, we'd return to the oval waiting room, modern, sun-drenched, with smiling baby pictures on the wall and physicians' offices around the perimeter. We'd occasionally be taken aback to see someone we knew, though the effect was more a sense of camaraderie than embarrassment. We now see some of these same women around our neighbourhood, children in tow.

Our travails at Hadassah coincided with the second intifadah (2000–2005), during which Palestinian terrorism, most notoriously in the form of café and bus suicide bombings, claimed over a thousand Israeli dead and 6,000 wounded. Yet in the surreal cocoon of Hadassah's east Jerusalem IVF clinic we might, on any given day, be assigned to an Arab physician who was treating us with professionalism and empathy, even as, next door, a Jewish doctor might be working likewise with an Arab couple. And, save for incidental expenses, it didn't cost any of us a penny – or in Israeli currency, an agora, because all citizens and permanent residents of metropolitan Jerusalem – Jews, Arabs, Christians, and Muslims – are eligible for fertility treatment, gratis.

As a matter of national policy, little Israel is the country most committed to IVF. Just how deep-rooted this obligation is becomes apparent when you consider what happened in the early 2000s when it was challenged by the Finance Ministry on budgetary grounds. In Knesset (parliamentary) hearings on the Treasury's proposal to cut the budget for IVF, Finance Ministry civil servants told lawmakers that there had been a 54 per cent increase in IVF spending from 2000 to 2009. The tab was covered in the basic "health basket" – meaning that IVF was treated like a flu shot or blood pressure medicine: if you needed it, you got it. Reproduction assistance covered diagnosis and therapy for both couples and non-married childless women.

> *As a matter of national policy, little Israel is the country most committed to IVF.*

The mandarins at Finance tried to frame the discussion about IVF in straightforward public policy terms: There were limited resources; IVF was an indulgence; plainly it mustn't be allowed to take precedence over, say, cancer treatment or geriatric rehabilitation facilities. Proponents of universal free IVF came back with what amounted to a national security counter-argument. Making babies was a strategic need. Israel was a small country, demographically outnumbered, and surrounded by intractable enemies. Jews needed to remain the decided majority between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea in order for the polity to remain both Jewish and democratic. The claim was put forth that it was less expensive to make babies at home than pay for mass immigration from the Diaspora.

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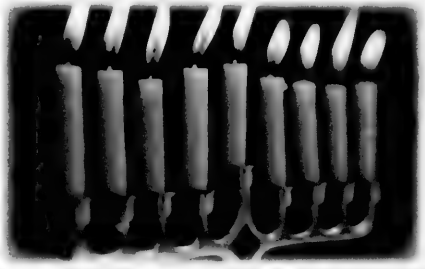

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Tellingly, pragmatic arguments about balance sheets and demographic interests didn't sway the Knesset members. What seemed to make the difference in Israel's inimitable sociocultural milieu was the emotional argument, which came from across the political spectrum. From Palestinian Arab nationalists like Ahmed Tibi (who, not incidentally, is a Hebrew University-trained gynecologist), to non- Zionist ultra-Orthodox MKs, to Zionist security hawks, to dovish liberals – all coalesced behind the idea that Israeli citizens have an intrinsic "right" to parenthood, viewing infertility as a treatable ailment and IVF not only as a cure, but as a citizen's entitlement.

Men and women struggling to become parents testified before the Knesset during committee hearings, invoking this "right" to build a family. Paraphrasing the famous talmudic dictum (Nedarim 64b), one MK from the ultra-Orthodox Sephardi Shas Party declared, "If you don't have children you are as good as dead." He spoke of the angst experienced by childless couples: "Everything is extinguished.

There's no happiness, just sadness."

A fertility expert testified in no less poignant terms, describing the "disease" of infertility as "no less fatal than cancer," and painting the psyches of those affected this way: "The woman is ostracized, the man cannot be part of the community, and the family ceases to exist." The recurring theme articulated by lawmakers, witnesses, and experts from disparate backgrounds was that family had a singular place in Israeli society – in both the Jewish and Arab communities.

> *And the most important element of family is children.*

And the most important element of family is children.

In the words of one MK : "Who among us can say that he would forgo a child? No one!" In fact, went the argument, no one should be expected to "make do" with only one child. A dovish MK said that talk of demography was beside the point. All that really mattered was "the uncomplicated need that society has to provide for couples who want to have more than one child." A rabbi-physician told a hearing: "We are dealing here with the creation of human life, and with the issue of realizing the right to parenthood. This is a basic right."

The Finance Ministry lost the budget battle and money was removed from elsewhere in the social welfare budget to protect the special place of IVF. By 2012, this "basic right" was extended to same-sex couples.

Each new day brings further advances in IVF technology, yet it's hardly the case that IVF guarantees success. All things being equal – age, health, physician skills – most women in their 30s and 40s don't get pregnant. In our age bracket the success rate is about 20 per cent. In Israel, taken as a whole, the IVF failure rate is a staggering 75 per cent. These failures are attributed 30 per cent of the time to women and men equally, to both jointly in 18 per cent of the cases, and to no known reason 21 per cent of the time. There are no empty picture frames in IVF clinic waiting rooms for all the babies that didn't get made.

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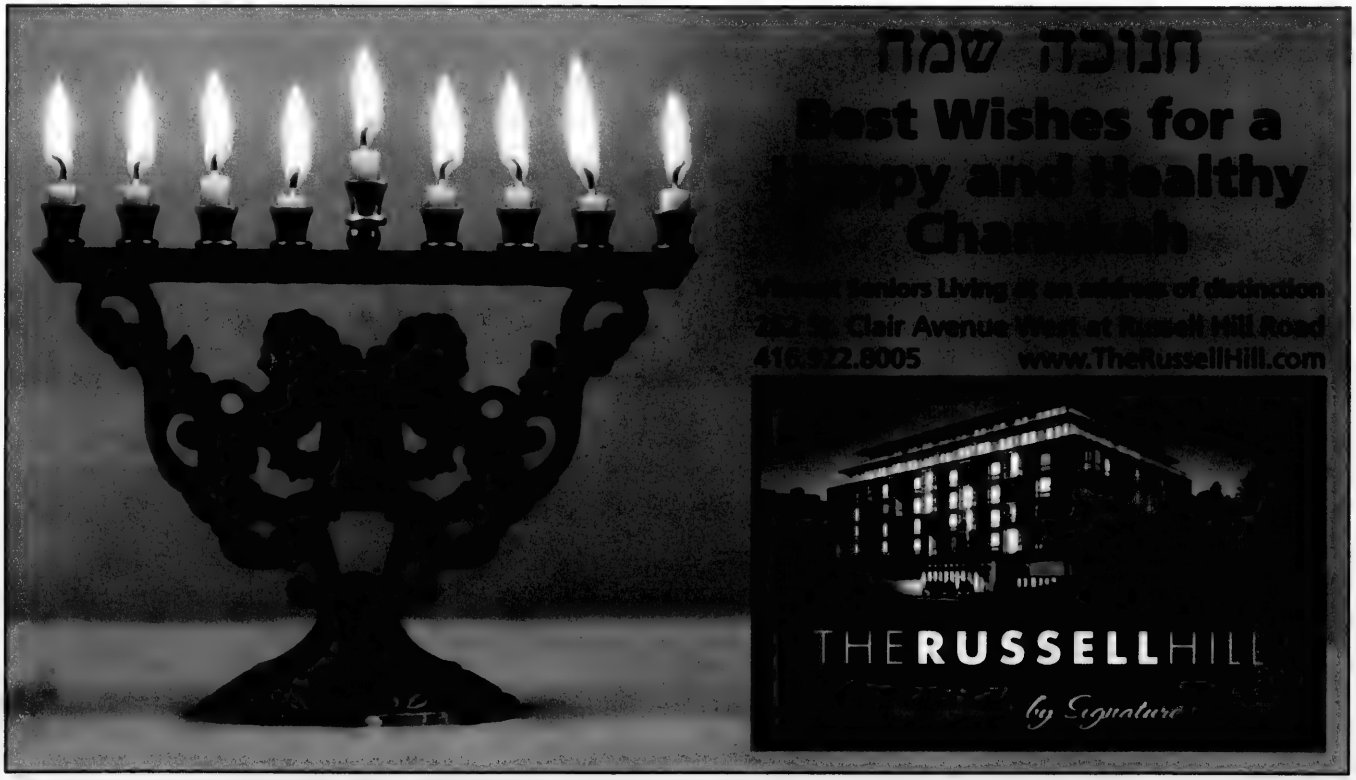

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After five or six gruelling rounds – each cycle takes about six weeks not counting waiting in between – Lisa and I decided we'd had enough. On top of everything else, we worried about the long-term consequences of the hormones she was taking. Thus, we became part of the dismal statistic: some 30 per cent of infertility cases worldwide go unexplained.

Not long ago, former British Labour Party figure David Miliband described his IVF experience as "drawn out," "difficult," and "emotionally exhausting." There came a point when the Milibands too realized they "had reached the end of the line and we weren't going to give birth." They ultimately opted to go through the "daunting" process of adoption in the U.S. and are now the parents of two young children. (David Miliband currently heads the U.S.-based International Rescue Committee.) Although David and Louise Miliband are at least 10 years younger than us, and maybe a little better connected, the question remains: Why didn't Lisa and I consider other avenues, like adoption or surrogacy? All I know is that, like the Milibands, we were emotionally drained and frustrated; we were also angry about our fate. Adoption isn't an easy process, especially not in Israel, and it would have required a resilience we just didn't have at the time. Given our ages, we were probably not prime candidates for a healthy local baby. Adopting from abroad would have entailed battling bureaucracies – foreign as well as Israel's own formidable officialdom. And it would not have been cheap, though that was not the deciding factor.

> *Adoption or surrogacy would not have changed the fact that I was the last of my line on my mother's side.*

Moreover, I told myself that I wasn't interested in a trophy child which was how I imagined one that wasn't our biological offspring. And anyway, adoption or surrogacy would not have changed the fact that I was the last of my line on my mother's side. The only child of an only child. The decision may appear short-sighted, but that's how I felt. Since neither Lisa nor I were ardently for adoption or surrogacy, we let those possibilities slide.

A friend once asked if we went through something like Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's neat five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Real life isn't that straightforward. I felt anger, that's for sure. Especially when I read about children abused, abandoned, even murdered by their parents. Why would God give children to people who didn't want them or couldn't care for them, instead of to us?

To the extent that we are at peace with our childlessness and our decision not to adopt – it is thanks to a remarkable, humane, empathetic couples' psychologist named Edna Dolan. Edna came recommended by a close friend, and for a good number of months, first as we wound down IVF and then as we mourned the loss of the child we would never have, she became our emotional life raft. Lisa and I usually met with Edna in her Mevaseret Zion home-office, located on a steep hilltop just outside Jerusalem. Israeli-born, Edna's excellent English came in handy, since we were not about to deal with these issues in anything but our native tongue.

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We hashed out our raw feelings about a lot of things, including adoption. We did a lot of crying. Edna was our safe haven at a time when everything seemed fraught and precarious. She taught us how to listen to each other using a technique called mirroring. Sometimes I'd hear Lisa say something, but in a cognitive process of which I was only semi-aware, I'd reinterpret her feelings to fit my own preconceived notions. So to make sure lines of communication were truly open between Lisa and me, Edna showed us how to mirror, listening methodically and then prefixing our replies with, "I hear you saying that…". It may sound banal, but allowing ourselves to be clear about our feelings helped us secure and strengthen our relationship against the ravages of failed IVF treatments.

When I decided to write about Edna, I wanted to check the appropriateness of it with her first. I soon discovered the sad news that she had died of cancer some years ago. That hit me. We had last seen her when we paid a shivah visit after Edna's teenage son died in tragic circumstances. It took me weeks to find the right moment to tell Lisa that Edna herself was now gone. May her memory be a blessing.

As for why Lisa and I did not try surrogacy, that would have been even more problematic than adoption. I understand that some folks pay over $100,000 to make babies using someone else's egg, someone else's womb, and someone else's sperm. It might be right for some couples, but we weren't enthusiastic about the idea of leasing a womb – or more – from another human being, possibly in some underdeveloped country. It would have forced us to wrestle with legal,ethical, and halachic questions at a time when our emotional stamina was low. It was also true that while we knew people who'd adopted or gone through the IVF process, we just didn't know anyone who had gone the surrogacy route.

Lisa and I know any number of women who long to get married and have children, but simply have not found the right partner. Some of our friends, men and women, find the sting of loneliness less painful than the possibility of hurt that necessarily comes with attempting an intimate relationship. Of course I'm glad for the women in our circle, mostly Lisa's friends from before we were married, who had the spunk to go through IVF and bring children into this world on their own. It fascinates me that their children are growing up without dads, and I wonder if they feel "fatherless" despite never having lost one to death, divorce, or abandonment.

> *I can't help but think what might have been thoughts as I observe children around us throwing age appropriate tantrums.*

Meanwhile, I can't help but think what-might-have-been thoughts as I observe children around us throwing age-appropriate tantrums, taking on likeable personas, cracking jokes, and gradually reaching bar or bat mitzvah age. On such occasions, even as I take joy in the happiness of my friends and relatives, I would be dishonest to deny a sense of melancholy that Lisa and I can only be spectators to such milestones.

Not being a parent has attuned me to the various hues of childlessness.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

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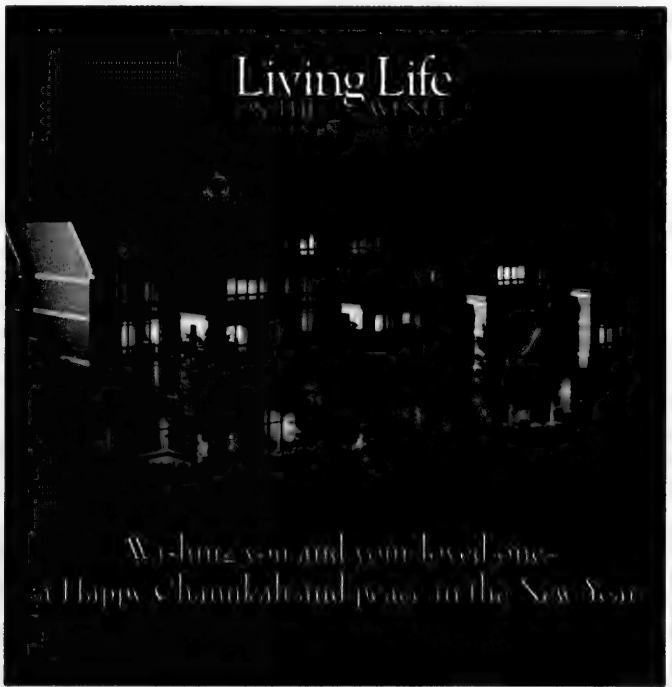

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After our failed IVF experience I made a (for me) monumental decision – though at the time I didn't admit a connection because, really, it was the culmination of a number of factors.

I took off my kippah.

Frum – religiously observant – from birth, I wore a yarmulke on the tough streets of the Lower East Side in the '60s and '70s, mostly without thought or choice, though sometimes defiantly in the face of abuse and bullying from my Puerto Rican neighbours. I continued to wear it for the 23 years I worked in New York City government. I attended meetings on behalf of my agency in some of New York's worst neighbourhoods, wearing my yarmulke.

It was a decision that had been percolating for some time. Theologically, I no longer believed myself to be Orthodox, and worried I was putting up a false front. And in Israel, what one wears or doesn't wear on one's head is laden with political, religious, and cultural connotations. At the time, however, I didn't admit to myself – much less to anyone else – that there was a deeper impetus for the decision, and it wasn't just a desire to avoid phoniness.

The first few days, it was awkward to go bareheaded. At work, several people asked me what was going on. None got a straight answer because I didn't have one. Instead, I resorted to my lifelong fallback: I made a joke and changed the subject. But the truth was I felt let down by the Creator of the Universe and I needed to let Him know. I felt God had hidden His face from me, and keeping my kippah in my pocket was a form of personal protest. It was also a belated rebellion against my spiritually wasted yeshiva years. And it was my own silent stand against those who defame God's holy name by behaving badly with little thought to the yarmulkes on their heads.

At first, my decision left me uneasy. In the Diaspora, yarmulkes are partly intended to declare membership in the tribe, to identify Jews among gentiles. In Israel, they are more like bumper stickers. Jewish Israeli men are defined not only by whether they wear a kippah, but by its style – velvet, large, and black for the ultra-Orthodox, knitted for the national-religious, and endless variations in between.

In post-biblical times, Jewish custom demanded men and (married) women cover their hair: women for the sake of modesty, both sexes as a sign of God above. A mid-19th-century code of Jewish conduct and law held that "a man ought not to walk four cubits" bareheaded because doing so "suggests overbearing pride, ignoring God's omnipresence." By the 17th century, Jews made a point of covering their heads in contradistinction to Christians, who even prayed bareheaded.

> *The truth was I felt let down by the Creator of the Universe and I needed to let him know.*

I had never explicitly tied the decision to stop wearing a kippah to my childlessness – to feeling abandoned by my Father in Heaven. In hindsight, though, it seems as it was integral. Much later I told my friend George about my kippah saga, and he said that whenever he hears that some great personal misfortune has led X to change his view of life, or of God – "and I definitely include myself in this, and I speak from my own experience" – he wonders whether the evidence was there all along but X ignored it, or its implications, until the misfortune happened to him personally.

Addressing himself to my case, George said: "You must have known long before you met Lisa that there were childless people who longed for children and would have made good parents, but that knowledge didn't have much effect, if any, on your attitude to God. The fact that He had let other people down didn't make much impression on you. That is, in a sense, quite obvious and understandable; but once you start to think about it, it raises questions about us and our capacity for fellow-feeling."

I can't disagree.

Dan Lobel, whom I knew from my days as a technical writer at a high- tech firm in Tel Aviv, is one of those lanky, earnest, analytical people who don't make you feel uncomfortable for not sharing their spiritual passions. I joke that he'd make a good Jewish Dalai Lama. He's principled, ascetic, and always seems to stay on an even keel. Like me and Lisa, he and his wife Tzipi tried IVF only to find it did not work for them.

Born in Toronto, Dan was already in his 30s when he embarked on a two-year trek, mostly in Asia, in search of some greater purpose to his life. His parents were non-practicing Reform Jews who only rarely attended temple.

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They perfunctorily sent him to Sunday school, where his interest in Judaism remained, unsurprisingly, dormant.

"I was on a shoestring budget when I arrived in Jerusalem in the autumn of 1995. Costs were considerably more than what I had become accustomed to in Asia. So, I started working as a night check-in clerk at a hostel," Dan recalls. "I was meeting all sorts of travellers who were saying things like, 'Isn't Jerusalem awesome and spiritual?' and it just wasn't clicking with me. I was in a funk, sleeping during the day, getting up at 5 p.m. for 'breakfast' just as the sun was going down, and spending my nights folding guests' laundry, emptying ashtrays and cleaning toilets. I was considering moving on when my travel buddy suggested I do a class. He said that Aish HaTorah, in Jerusalem's Old City, was running a seminar. So I took off a few nights from work and went." Dan enrolled first in Aish HaTorah and later at Ohr Somayach, two academies which specialize in kiruv, making Orthodox Judaism accessible to unaffiliated young Jews, most of whom do not stay on in Israel.

"I recall signs directing participants to the Aish building – things were more Spartan than today – with the word 'Discovery' and arrows pointing you through the maze of Jerusalem's Old City. And below the arrows was the catchphrase: 'If you have questions....' I recall thinking to myself, 'Questions? What questions? I don't have any questions.' God was completely off my radar at that point. But the program turned out to be fascinating, touching on religion, history, philosophy, science. Although I had no questions going in, I came out with a whole pile of them." Dan studied three months at Aish and another three at Ohr Somayach. By the time he returned to Canada he was on an Orthodox trajectory.

He eventually found his way back to Israel where, at a Shabbat luncheon, he met another English speaker, an attractive, tender- hearted social worker with a porcelain complexion named Tzipi. The chemistry was just right.

> *Finally she just completely dissolved. She couldn't carry on. I can't say I was surprised*

As I sat speaking with Dan in their living room, he told me about their journey through infertility treatments. Within two years of their marriage, seeing they weren't getting pregnant, the couple began IVF at Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus – the same place Lisa and I had undergone our treatments. They told almost no one. He was 44 and she was 37.

It turns out that Tzipi has an unbearable fear of needles, and the IVF process requires that you inject yourself at the same time everyday with hormones. She tried it for a while, but just couldn't do it herself. So Dan would go to her workplace to give her the jab. "There we were in the storage room among grimy documents, decaying newspapers, and stale, empty beer bottles. Me with the syringe in my hands, Tzipi often bursting into tears.

Finally, she just completely dissolved. She couldn't carry on. I can't say I was surprised. When Tzipi goes for an immunization, she practically passes out."

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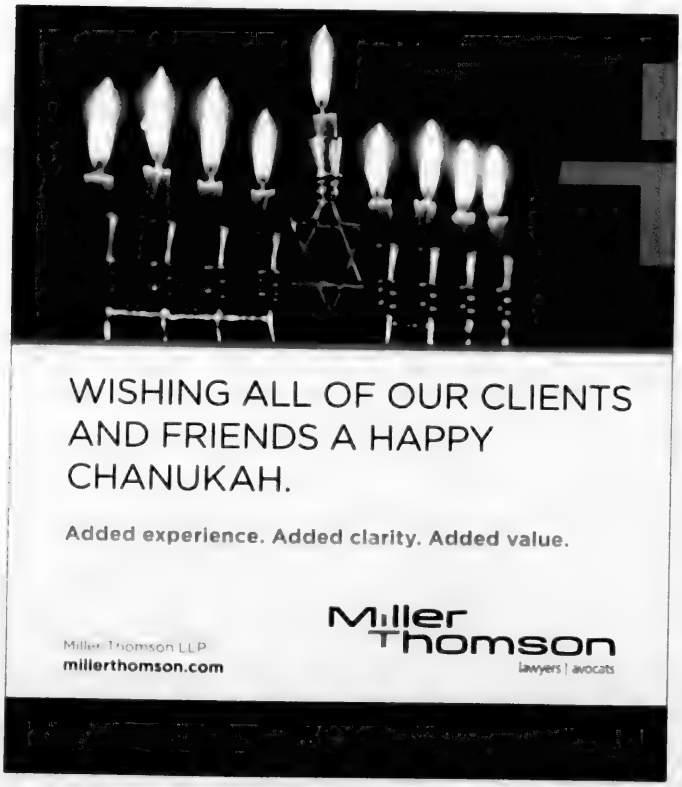
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Dan's story reminded me of how Lisa would sometimes show up at the *Jerusalem Post*, when I was an editor there, for her jab. We'd lock ourselves in the dusty newspaper morgue for the procedure. We, however, came out smiling – God only knows what my colleagues surmised.

Dan told me he was angry – at Tzipi, at himself, at the situation – for something like 24 hours. "Then I said to myself, 'OK. It hurts. And I wish we could do something about that. But nothing hurts me more than seeing Tzipi hurting.'" Afterwards, he told me, "I just decided everyone has their limits about certain things, and what's the point of being angry? She had reached her limit – there was no doubt.

"People think IVF is as simple as popping an aspirin," Dan added. "They don't have problems having children, and only become aware of those who do when they hear about a successful IVF outcome. Most people going through IVF don't broadcast it. So if they are unsuccessful, no one will ever know; outsiders will never get a sense of the percentage of failures vis-à-vis successes.

"People whom IVF has failed, for one reason or another, are not flag-wavers. I'm in that 75 per cent."

Barely catching their breath after their IVF ordeal, Dan and Tzipi decided to adopt a child. "We went through all the hoops. All the meetings, interviews, paperwork, psychological evaluations, a daylong psychometric exam, for which we paid NIS 2,500 (US$680). There was a hilarious interview with a psychologist who was evaluating our answers and showing us, I swear to you, Rorschach blots, asking us what we saw; it was like out of a movie. I couldn't believe people still did that.

"So we went through all of that. And the last phase for getting approved for adoption is that they come for a visit to make sure you don't live in filth, with rats. The social worker came to our home and saw that we were clean and normal. She told us that everything was good to go: 'You guys should have no problem getting accepted.'"

Because of their ages, they were not eligible to adopt a healthy newborn, though they could adopt a child between ages six and 10 who most likely would come with some disadvantage or impairment. Dan had concerns about the undertaking, but was willing to go ahead anyway. Now, it was just a matter of getting written confirmation in the mail after the adoption approval committee had made its formal decision. Weeks stretched into months and still Dan and Tzipi heard nothing.

> *Then, out of the blue, came an awful blow.*

Then, out of the blue, came an awful blow. Dan became aware of a growth, and his worst fears were realized when the biopsy results came back positive. A random unexpected occurrence had fundamentally changed Dan's life. He went from prospective new dad to cancer patient.

"We were on the cusp of adoption, and God said no.

"About two weeks into dealing with the cancer horror, we got a call from the social worker asking if we were coming to the parenting class. It's the class you have to go through once you've been approved. And then you can adopt.

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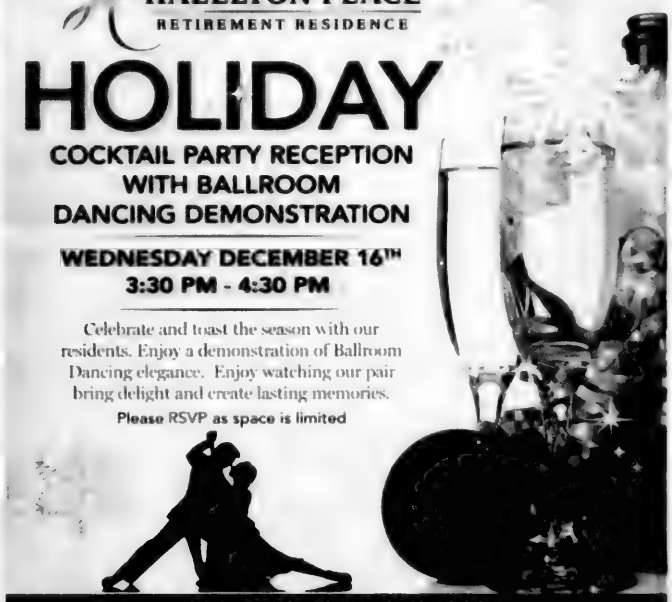

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"And we said, 'Approved?' "'Didn't you get the letter?' "'No.'"

They never did get the letter of approval. And because of Dan's cancer treatment, they couldn't attend the class.

Although Dan is now in remission, he still hasn't regained his full stamina, and he and Tzipi are no longer sure the conventional adoption program they were involved in makes sense for them. They are exploring becoming emergency foster parents – "for when the cops have to pull a child out of the house at 3 a.m. – the catch being you have to be willing to care for three children at a time, under the age of six, who are all coming from trauma," Dan explains.

Still another program they're considering would allow them to adopt the newborn baby of a drug addict. The catch is that such an infant would essentially go through withdrawal, and may need detoxification. By signing up for the program Dan and Tzipi would be on a fast track to becoming the infant's permanent adoptive parents. The downside is that such a child may well be damaged by their prenatal exposure to narcotics, and there is no guarantee Dan and Tzipi would be approved to officially adopt the infant. They might care for it for six months or more while its legal status is clarified, only to be told they must give up the child.

It's not a frivolous decision, and they're waiting until Dan feels more like himself before making the final call.

I asked him what he tells people when they casually ask if he has children. He said his stock answer is, "No, *be'ezrat Hashem* – God willing." When I raised an eyebrow, he replied, "Look, Tzipi hasn't gone through menopause. We're still in the game. A miracle can happen. Why not?"

Of course, I said, there are all these folks who purposefully opt not to have kids. They wonder about the wisdom of bringing children into the world. Some worry that they won't be good parents. Some had such traumatically lousy childhoods that they can't imagine having the inner resources to give a child what he or she needs. Dan reserved judgment. "There is more than selfishness to consider. There are people who think the world is such a mess, they don't want to bring kids into it."

Dan and I agreed that this stance is somehow un-Jewish. However, Dan then surprised me by asking, "But what makes it 'un-Jewish' in your eyes?" My reply was knee-jerk. It is "un-Jewish" because Jews are part of a collective, and in order to have quality, we also need quantity. "That's like a fascist view of Judaism," Dan countered. "That everything is done for the nation."

I recoiled at the fascist accusation. Had I the presence of mind, I might have quoted Emil Fackenheim's proposition about not giving Hitler any posthumous victories. We need to make lots of babies *auftzuluchis* – to spite Hitler – just to dance on his grave. Not seeing my Judaism through Dan's religious lens – or at least not with his sense of certainty and profound faith – for me being Jewish is, indeed, foremost a notion of peoplehood.

"Stating that by choosing not to have kids you're not contributing to the gene pool – to me, that's a very non-Jewish approach. Or, at least, not a specifically Jewish approach," Dan added. Dan's point is that procreation is the first imperative for all of humanity, and not exclusive to Judaism.

"All right, then what makes it un-Jewish not to have kids, in your eyes?" I asked.

"I think a very Jewish approach to life is always optimism and the hope of things getting better, whether on a national level – believing in redemption and the Messiah – or, on a personal level, in growth and self-development. Judaism has put an incredibly strong emphasis on hope. Despite all the odds, despite all the tragedies, despite all the difficulties. To say 'look how terrible the world is' and to come to the decision not to have kids – that, to me, is un-Jewish. Looking at the world as a mess and saying I am not going to bring anyone into this is un-Jewish because it denies hope. It denies that things can get better, that you can play a part in their getting better. Whereas, Elliot, your answer has nothing to do with Judaism."■

Excerpted from The Pater: My Father, My Judaism, My Childlessness, by Elliot Jager. Published by Toby Press. For more information, visit www.korenpub.com.

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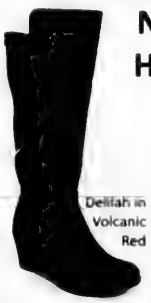

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Pebble-like device goes up against the hackers

DAVID SHAMAH
JERUSALEM

More connected devices are connecting with more databases and sharing more information than ever – and we're just at the beginning of the data-gathering revolution that the Internet of Things will bring us. Unfortunately, according to security experts, Kaspersky Lab, that provides hackers with more opportunities to steal more data, especially from devices that are essentially unprotected.

"The bond of trust between users and their devices can lead them to forget about security," said Victor Yablokov, head of mobile product line at Kaspersky Lab.

"It's hard to imagine that something we carry close to us at all times and turn to for everything could ever become a threat. But it can, and does happen. A digital friend can become a digital frenemy," doing good for us while doing harm at the same time, he said.

"A failure to appreciate the potential risks and to protect our devices and information accordingly could mean the loss of confidential information, money and even our identities. Security is simply not an optional extra."

To the rescue comes an Israeli start-up called Dojo Labs, which, with a stylish stone-like device, will monitor all data sent by anything connected to the Internet – smart TVs, smartphones, smart tablets, smart refrigerators, even smart water faucets – to determine whether they are sending out data in amounts or in ways that do not fit their profile.

Such activity, according to Dojo co-founder and CEO Yosi Atias, could be a signal that a hacker has taken control of a device and is using a device as a way to get into a network and steal sensitive data.

"A hacker isn't necessarily interested in a specific device, like a connected refrigerator," Atias told the *Times of Israel*. "But they may use it as a gateway to get into a network and steal data from a computer that is on the network, or even activate a camera or microphone and upload the video via their hack."

In other words, a smart TV that a user thinks was turned off could be activated remotely by a hacker who breaks into the network via, for example, a connected weather station that downloads temperature and humidity information from the network, and is connected to a home heating system. If that smart TV is in the bedroom, a hacker could get hold of some very intimate footage by activating a webcam in a smart TV – with the victim clueless until they find out from YouTube that they are the stars of a porno.

Israeli start-up Dojo Labs created this stylish stone-like device.

Smartphones and other connected devices are more a part of life than ever, a study released last week by Kaspersky Lab said. Smart devices "are carried and used everywhere, including at work (52 per cent), in a car (41 per cent), on public transport (39 per cent), in bed (58 per cent) and even in the bathroom (29 per cent)."

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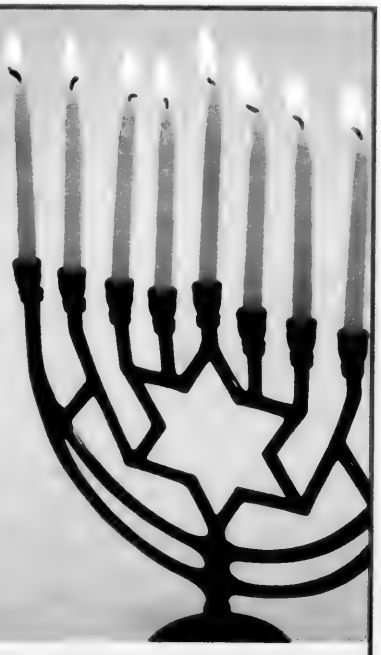

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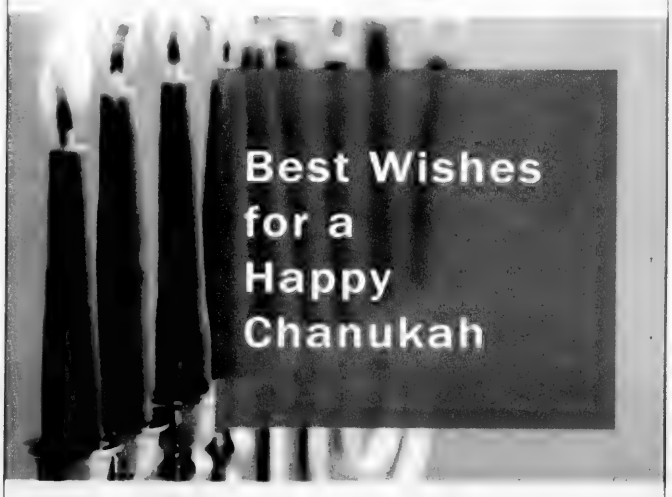

Best Wishes for a Happy Chanukah

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Users may be giving strangers access to their private moments

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

The relationship between users and their digital devices is often closer than between best friends, the report said – because how many people would allow even their closest friends with them into the bathroom?

But by bringing a connected tablet into the bathroom, bedroom, or anywhere else in the house, said Atias, users may be giving complete strangers access to their most private moments.

"Our Dojo device is a local intelligent unit which takes care of threat detection and prevention along side with network management and control," he said. "Dojo constantly analyzes all the network traffic within the home network and enforces the security policy of that specific network, while observing the behaviour of specific connected devices.

"We check not the data itself, but how much of it is sent, where it is sent to, and the metadata on what kind of data is being sent. If your connected refrigerator is sending out video, for example, we detect that and alert you with the Dojo 'stone' glowing in different colours," said Atias, adding that the system also prevents attacks in the first place by monitoring suspicious incoming communication, and stopping it in its tracks.

In addition to checking suspicious behaviour based on a profile of the device, he added, Dojo also compares its behaviour with other ones of the same brand and/or type used by Dojo customers.

"We compare the behaviour of your connected refrigerator, for example, not just based on what it usually does, but on what other connected refrigerators do as well," said Atias. "Thus we can determine whether the security breach is a 'local' one due to a hack attack, or if there is security problem with the specific product that the factory needs to address."

The Dojo, which is priced at around $100, including a year of monitoring service, is set to be released next year. The system includes the Dojo device, a "pebble" that can be moved around the house to detect data leaks from smart devices (the Dojo does its monitoring via Bluetooth). Light rings on the pebble glow when there is activity on your network.

When an alert is issued, it shows up on the Dojo mobile app, allowing users to remotely turn off a device or block its

> *We can determine... if there is a security problem with the specific product that the factory needs to address.*

communications. Data about network connectivity is uploaded to Dojo's Intelligence Engine, which detects cyber threats and abnormal behaviour through machine learning and proprietary algorithms, paired with Dojo-Labs' cyber research.

While there are plenty of security solutions for computers, from firewalls to anti-virus programs, the need for those safety measures has not yet filtered down to the makers of smart devices, said Atias. "Many of these devices are made by consumer electronics firms that have not had to contend with cyber-security issues in the past, so it is going to take time for them to get used to this new world."

Until that happens, said Atias, Dojo can be the "adult in the room" that keeps an eye on digital "frenemies. Dojo knows when the TV is still recording your voice even if it's off and when that data is being uploaded to the cloud," he said. "We all lock our front doors and yet our devices are wide open. Our homes contain our most intimate data but the security of these things is an afterthought. We created Dojo as the first technology to help us safeguard our homes." ■

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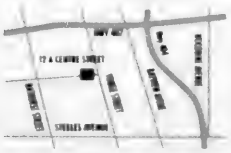

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Happy Chanukah

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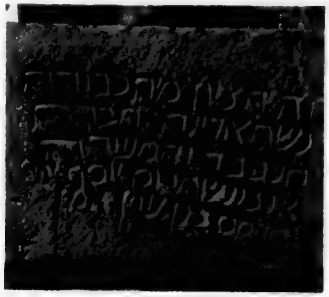
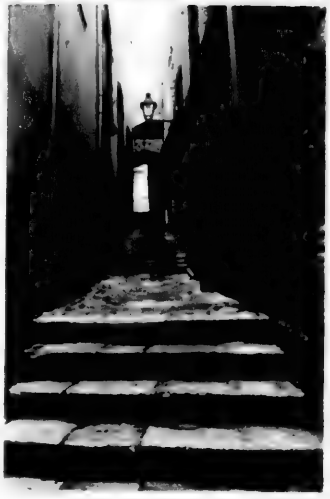
Jewish Quarter of Girona is well preserved neighbourhood

MARILYN LAZAR
SPECIAL TO THE CJN





Pictured clockwise from top, the river between old and new Girona, a tombstone in the museum and a street in Old Girona. MARILYN LAZAR PHOTOS

Hard to believe it wasn't that long ago that I spent a warm, wonderful week in Spain – including a day on the beach! This morning, as I write this in mid-November, there's frost on the ground at home; and troops on the ground in Paris and Belgium. Most eerily, as I submit this travel tale about the end of Jewish days in a European city, I spot this headline on the front page of the *National Post*: "3,000 years of history end for Aleppo Jews", detailing the evacuation of its last Jewish family after persevering through increasing hardship, persecution and danger.

In years of day school education, lively discussions around the Shabbat dinner table and ruminations about the circuitous Jewish journey, how did I miss the significance of Girona? This much I can say for sure: on two separate trips to Spain, which included beautiful Malaga and the Costa del Sol, Seville, Grenada, Ronda and Barcelona, my most worthwhile day was the one spent in Girona.

The cab driver drops us at the foot of a street so winding and narrow that we can't see more than a few buildings ahead and certainly can't envision our destination: Museu d'Historia dels Jueus, or the Jewish Museum. However, it's apparent that the car can proceed no further and that the driver is aware of the site and confident of the intersection. So we take our bags and his directions and proceed by foot, the way that Jews first did on this very spot some twelve hundred years ago.

The labyrinth of interconnected streets and winding alleyways that comprise the old Jewish Quarter of Girona is among the best preserved Jewish neighbourhoods in all of Europe. At the top, we enter a building which is unassuming from the outside. But it contains a carefully curated exhibit where contemporary architecture and sculpture offer a modern backdrop to an ancient story.

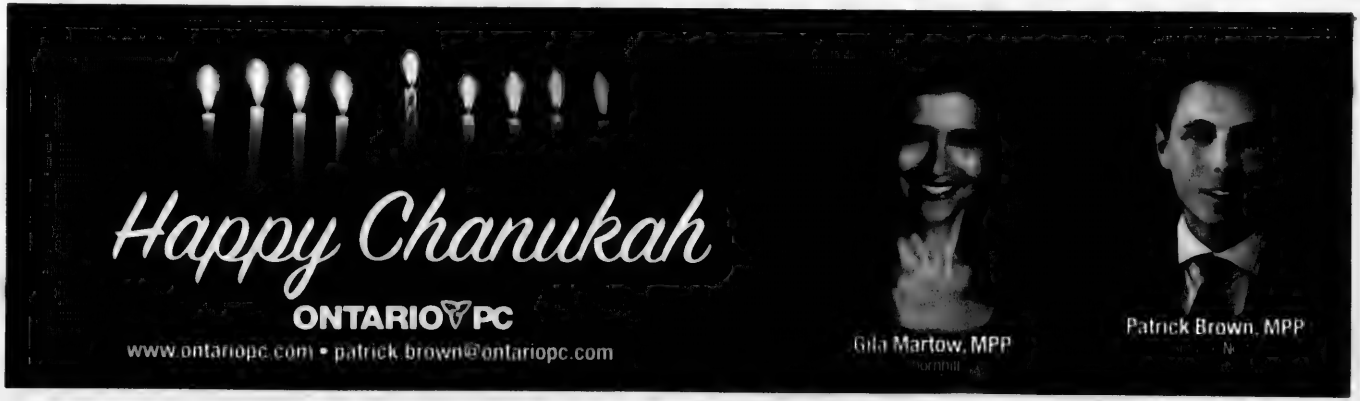
The story of Jews in Girona begins in the late ninth century. Within a hundred years, the community had prospered into an important part of society. However, by the 13th century, Jews were the victims of racism, eventually confined to what became a ghetto and banned from the city beyond. This continued until they were officially expelled from the country in 1492. With heartbreaking and well-documented detail, the museum tells the story of those intervening years, when Jews, with desperation and ingenuity, literally crept between walls and through secret passageways, into each others' homes, taking advantage of the varying levels of their dwellings and the surrounding streets to survive.

The museum is an excellent starting point, a fascinating combination of art, facts and artifacts, and an intersection of history and archeology. Of note, Girona was the birthplace of Nahmanides or Ramban, who spent most of his life there before departing for Israel. He practised medicine, studied philosophy and Bible and furthered the development of the Kabbalah. Allocate at least an hour to look at the exhibits and watch the films.

But you must also allocate at least two hours to walk around the old city and I recommend booking a private guide to accompany you. This experience is not to be missed and impossible to fully appreciate without a guide. Our guide Anna, a Buddhist married to a Christian, showed almost more reverence for the minutest of details of Jewish history which she uncovered for us than for the soaring spires of the Gothic churches we passed. She pointed out new condominiums built with old stones where a groove indicated that a mezuzah once nestled. Anna was knowledgeable about everything from cypress trees to the Cathedral, from the medieval walls to the mikvah, the Arab baths to the best spot for lunch.

Guides can be arranged in advance through the tourist office. Do this to maximize your time and also to co-ordinate with the hours of operation at the Jewish Museum, which vary from day to day. There is a 39-minute express train between Barcelona and Girona. The train is directly accessible from the subway so it makes for an easy day trip. Alternatively, there is good accommodation available in Girona, some very close to the old quarters. Or stay in the surrounding countryside; rustic Bordils for example, is about 10 kilometres northeast. If you drive, enjoy beautiful bonus views of the coast en route.

The town of Pubol, just northwest of Girona, boasts Casa-Museu Castell Gala Dali, a museum which was once a medieval castle, dedicated to surreal painter Salvador Dali and Gala, his wife and lifelong muse. ■



Canadian alumni president shares Brandeis message

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Brandeis University has a new alumni president – and for the first time, it's a Canadian. Mark Surchin was selected in June to represent over 45,000 alumni. As president, Surchin plans to share the Brandeis message in Canada as well as provide even more alumni services.

The Boston-area school changed the course of his life, Surchin says. Growing up in Montreal, he left for Brandeis in 1974, rather than attending CEGEP at home. He probably would have studied medicine in Montreal, but his years at Brandeis – he graduated in 1974 with a degree in politics – steered him into law instead.

Surchin believes that Brandeis offers something other universities do not: a major research university where undergraduates routinely assist professors, within a non-sectarian Jewish environment.

At Brandeis, Surchin says, he broke away from the rote memorization and multiple-choice tests he'd known in high school to explore major ideas and issues. "It's the bedrock of my education and my intellectual development."

His senior honours thesis explored the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "It wasn't memorization, I don't think I ever did a multiple choice test there… It was about anticipating what people who might disagree would say, expressing my views in an intellectually coherent way."

"Once I did that, I found law school kind of easy. I felt very prepared to study the law."

He says most people have one of two misconceptions about Brandeis: "One is that it's too Jewish; the other is that it's not Jewish enough."

"It's not like Yeshiva University, which started as a yeshiva and combines study of Torah with academic and secular pursuits," Surchin says.

Founded by the Jewish community, Brandeis was open to all students. The school was named for Louis Brandeis, the first Jewish justice of the U.S. supreme court, who championed social justice.

"You can study Jewish studies, there's a very vibrant Jewish life on campus," Surchin says. "But it's not a Jewish university per se. It's a world-class place that combines big with small, Judaism with diversity and academic rigour."

> *It's a world-class place that combines big with small, Judaism with diversity and academic rigour.*

Jewish life at Brandeis includes Hillel, theatre and Shabbat dinners. "There's a break the fast event on the big lawn after Yom Kippur… You're not going to get that at McGill. The academic calendar is the Jewish calendar."

Compared to other prestigious U.S. private universities, Brandeis faces unique challenges. "Because the school is so young…, we don't have 300 years of alumni history."

Where some schools might have long-standing scholarship endowments, invested over hundreds of years, Brandeis has had to be more creative in funding the next generation. "Brandeis has always had big dreams but… hasn't had the financial resources… We're getting there." About one-third of students now receive some sort of financial aid, says Surchin.

He and other Canadian alumni have put together a six-figure scholarship fund specifically for Canadian students. "We're aware that it's more expensive than a Canadian public university," Surchin says. Though other financial aid is available through the school, this scholarship could "make the difference between a student who's accepted being able to go or not being able to go."

The school's early growth was meteoric, Surchin says. "It went from a school that didn't exist to an elite school rather quickly," hosting prominent lecturers and receiving major accreditations and accolades.

Today, that growth includes a burgeoning cadre of international students from China, India, Korea and other distant countries, drawn to the school's reputation for academic excellence and serious research. And at a time when the climate on other U.S. and Canadian campuses has become increasingly anti-Israel, Brandeis is also a safe haven, he says.

"At some schools, students who are proudly Zionistic feel uncomfortable. That will never be true at Brandeis… Those things are not under attack there." ■

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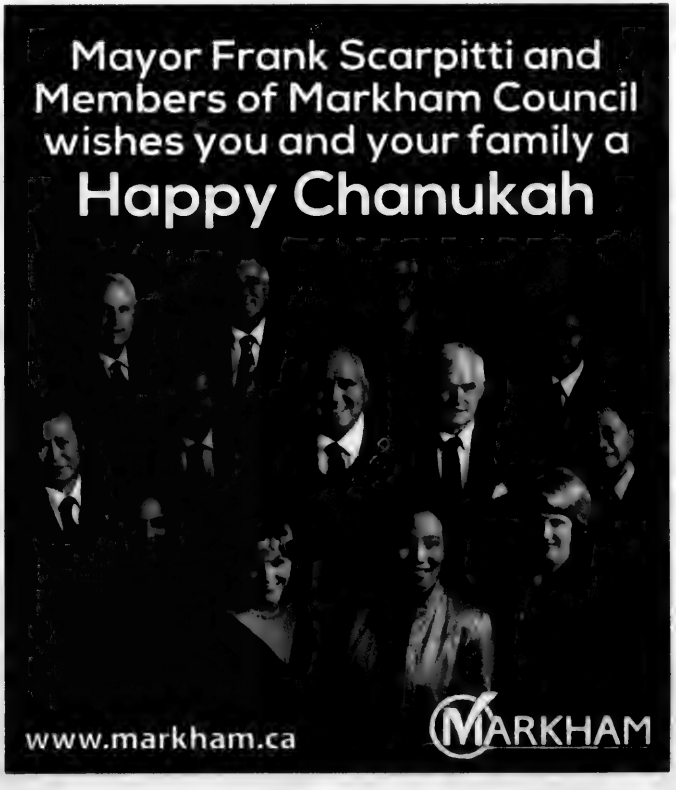
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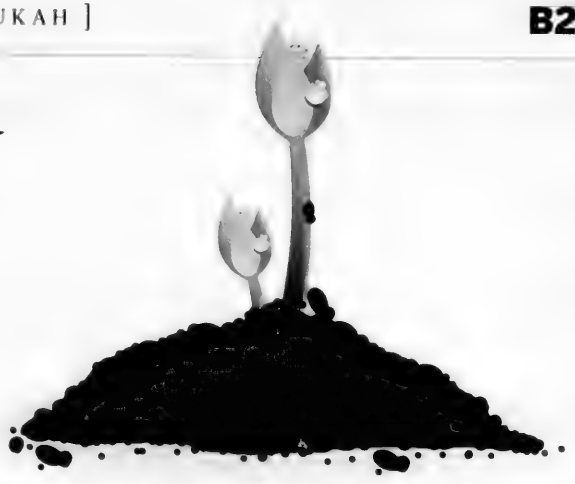
Galilee's 10,000 old beans are a taste of Stone Age innovation



ILAN BEN ZION
JERUSALEM

Next time you dip into some hummus with fava beans in the Galilee, be sure to thank its Neolithic inhabitants.

Researchers at the Weizmann Institute and the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) recently discovered the oldest known domesticated fava beans – about 10,200 years old – in the Galilee, pointing to a Neolithic diet rich in protein-rich legumes.

The study, published in *Nature* in October, examined the remains of hundreds of fava beans found at Ahihud, Nahal Zippori and Yiftah'el, three Neolithic sites in the Lower Galilee. It determined that domestication of the fava bean, today a major food source worldwide, must have taken place as early as the 11th millennium BCE.

Fava beans remain a major element in cuisines worldwide, the Middle East no exception. Study authors Valentina Caracuta, Omry Barzilai, Hamudi Khalaily, Ianir Milevski, Yitzhak Paz, Jacob Vardi, Lior Regev, and Elisabetta Boaretto point out that the humble fava bean is "the third most important feed grain legume after soybean and pea."

Stewed fava beans, known locally by the Arabic term *ful*, is a popular topping for hummus, the chickpea puree both Israelis and Palestinians are crazy about.

Moreover, the presence of a large quantity of seeds at the ancient sites points to agricultural planning and social cohesion. Storage of seeds selected for their thinner coats, allowing them to germinate quickly, reinforces the idea they were "used to ensure reliable harvesting, resulting in the build-up of characteristic domestication traits," the writers said.

The uniformity in the size of the 469 seeds studied points to sophisticated organization and deliberation, by which the early farmers harvested the seeds once they matured. Smaller seeds were selected for their ability to cope with drier conditions, and cultivation of legumes 10,000 years ago was possible "due to the ability of the local farmers to select seeds able to germinate under dryer conditions," the authors said.

In short, Neolithic Galileans were practising the long process of plant domestication.

Domestication of grains began in the Fertile Crescent, of which modern Israel constitutes the western flank, around 12,000 years ago, long before the emergence of cultivated legumes such as fava beans. Discovery of great quantities of peas, fava beans, chickpeas and lentils at these Neolithic sites point to their prominence in the diet of early sedentary peoples in the Lower Galilee, and their importance in reducing the risk of famine.

"Identifying the first places where the domestication of species of plants, which today constitute an indivisible part of our diet, is of great importance for research," the IAA quoted the researchers saying in a Hebrew statement. "Despite the dietary importance of grains to this day, apparently in the area we investigated – west of the Jordan River – they actually first domesticated legumes, which are rich in flavour and protein.

"Today it's clear that the area of the modern Galilee was the principle producer of legumes in the prehistoric era," they said. ■

On behalf of the Ontario Liberal Caucus, best wishes to the community.

Happy Hanukkah!

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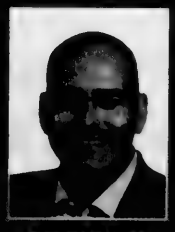

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Did Technion students discover cure for baldness?

SIMONA WINEGLASS

When 25-year-old Technion student Alexey Tomsov needed to come up with a project for the prestigious iGEM synthetic biology competition, he decided to untangle a problem close to home.

"My dad is bald, and I noticed my own hair is starting to thin," said the recent graduate in biotechnology and food engineering. "I thought, 'What can I do about this?'"

Tomsov looked at the products on the market and felt that none met his needs. A drug called Finasteride reduces hair loss but can cause serious sexual side effects. Other solutions are still in the research stages. Tomsov wanted to develop a topical solution that stops hair loss without affecting the rest of the patient's body.

Male pattern baldness, also known as androgenetic alopecia, affects up to 70 per cent of men and is believed to be caused by a derivative of testosterone called dihydrotestosterone (DHT). Tomsov and his team genetically engineered bacillus subtilis, a bacterium found naturally on the scalp, to secrete an enzyme that breaks down DHT. They also genetically engineered E.coli to enable the enzymatic reaction to take place. Using a comb, the two genetically engineered bacteria can be combined, causing a reaction that breaks down DHT on the scalp.

The Technion iGEM team.

The Technion iGEM team traveled to Massachusetts in September for the 2015 international iGEM synthetic biology competition, where they competed with 259 undergraduate and high school teams from around the world. The team won an iGEM 2015 Jamboree gold medal and first-place prize for Best New Application.

Tomsov and his team of nine other students, Yael Annis, Tal Ofek, Roni Cohen, Adi Yannai, Ruth Veksler, Liron Abrahami, Ma'ayan Lufton, Nitzan Shmuel and Sagi Sheinkman, won't have to search for jobs after graduation.

They have received an undisclosed amount of funding and assistance from the Technion to patent their technology and turn it into a startup.

"We still have more experiments to do before we can receive approval for human trials. We can't say at this stage how effective our product is or any questions regarding the stages of baldness it will cure."

But if successful, will the Technion students have discovered a cure for human baldness?

"This is a big statement," says Tomsov, "but yes, let's hope so."

If so, it would be quite a breakthrough. Entire movie plots, like that of the 2009 thriller *Duplicity*, have revolved around the potential discovery of a cure for baldness. Tomsov says he expects the product will more likely help people who are just beginning to go bald rather than people who have been bald for many years.

"When the hair follicle deteriorates and shuts down there's nothing we can do. When a person has been bald for 10 years I'm not sure there's a solution on the market aside from surgery."

If readers want to be part of the clinical trials, they can contact the team through its Facebook page and will be notified if and when these trials begin.

As part of their market research, the Technion team surveyed men and women about their perceptions of baldness. The results among women were inconclusive, but the Technion students did find that a large percentage of men, especially young men, find the prospect of losing their hair upsetting.

Asked why, Tomsov replies, "it has something to do with their sense of pride, but we don't have an answer. [Psychology] is not our field of study."

Tomsov says that all 10 members of the team are enormously proud of their accomplishment in the competition as well as the "pride we brought to Israel."

Does this mean that Israel will provide the world's answer to baldness and that boycotters of the country could find themselves hirsutely challenged?

Tomsov laughs. "Let's hope we have peace by then." ■

Timesofisrael.com

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Eight ways to celebrate Chanukah without gifts

MAAYAN JAFFE
JNS.ORG

Despite Chanukah being one of the few Jewish holidays not mentioned in the Torah, it gets a lot of play – pun intended.

Shmuel Arnold of Baltimore recalls that when he was growing up in a secular Jewish household, his parents made an extra effort to give Chanukah gifts every night. Sometimes they needed to get creative, like wrapping socks or delivering a gift from an extended family member.

Without even a rendition of *Rock of Ages* (*Maoz Tzur*) around the Chanukah menorah, Arnold says the holiday had one meaning: presents. Today, however, married with three children ranging in age from nine to 18, Arnold, like many other parents, tries to infuse more meaning into the Festival of Lights.

With eight days of Chanukah coming up, here are eight ways to celebrate the holiday that don't involve gifts:

Chanukah Crafts

Every year, children learn how to light the candles and about the miracle of the Maccabees in school or Hebrew school. They also make a token Chanukah menorah (or chanukiyah) – likely out of clay, nuts and bolts. Fun and creative activities can help Chanukah come alive at home, too. Pinterest has a colourful variety of Chanukah crafts that work for children ranging from toddlers to high schoolers.

A favourite in my house is the Chanukah handprint. Children dip their palms into a bowl of fabric paint and stamp it on a sweatshirt (it works on paper, too, but a sweatshirt is more practical). Then they dip each of their fingers into paint to create finger candles. Finally, they take their thumb and stamp it in the middle—the shamash (worker candle). Add a flame to each candle, and you're done!

My younger kids love the feel of the gushy paint and often use a different colour for every finger candle. My oldest daughter is careful to ensure her print looks authentic. She uses the same colour for the palm and the fingers and then adds perfect yellow or orange ovals on top.

Chanukah Party

It might not seem so original, but Chanukah is great time for a party. Unlike other Jewish holidays that involve extra time in synagogue, or for Orthodox Jews might preclude playing music or driving, Chanukah is eight days (except for a regularly observed Shabbat) of unabashed fun.

Birthday in a Box offers traditional Chanukah party tips, as well as some fun and quirky new spins on Chanukah decorations, food and favours.

Chanukiyah Tour

If you live in a "Jewish area," where lots of families celebrate the holiday, Arnold suggests taking a "chanukiayh tour." He says that in Baltimore or Israel (where he used to live), one can walk around the streets and see everyone's lights in the windows.

"It's amazing… Being a Yid is something you don't have to hide anymore.

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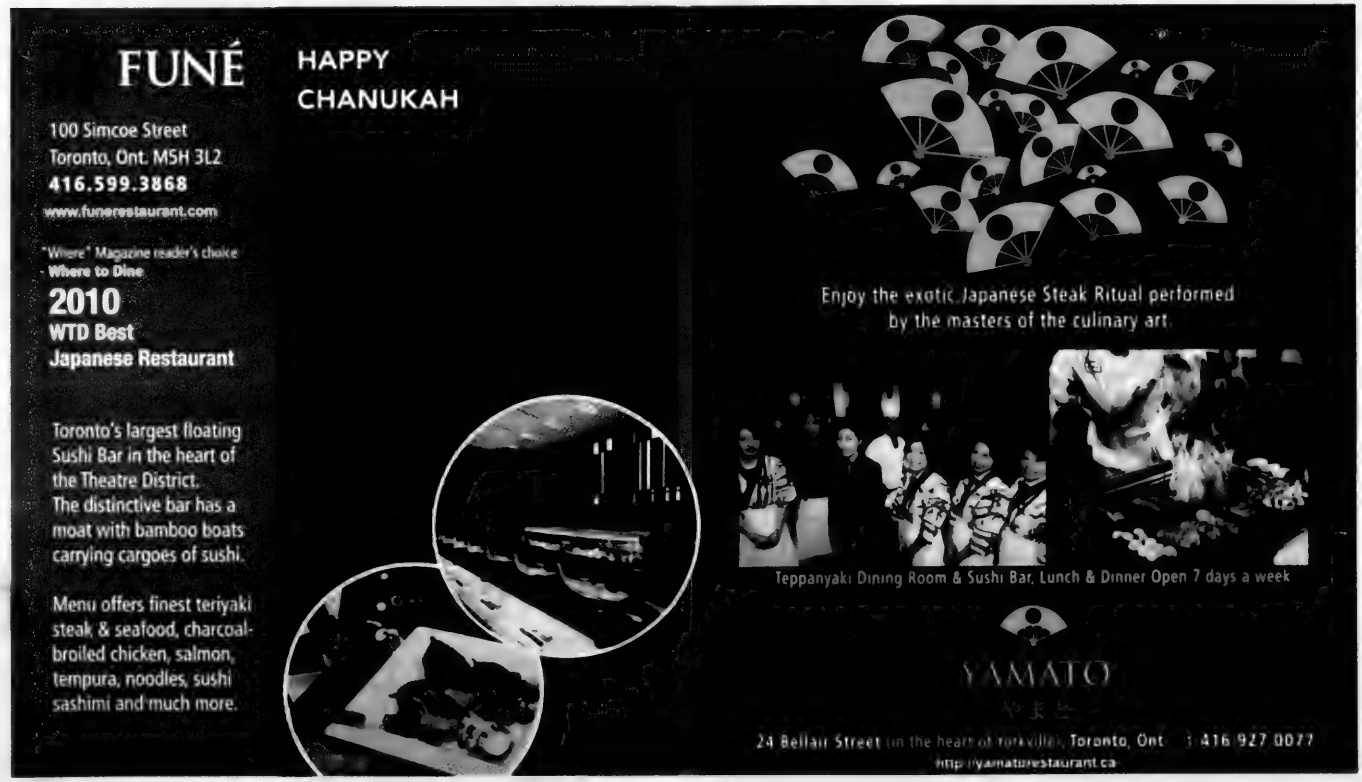
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Talk to your kids about the miracle of Chanukah

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

When my father was growing up, he used to get beaten up for being Jewish, and he learned to place the menorah on the table, somewhere hidden inside the house," says Arnold. "When we light, we make a big deal to put it in the window…and help people remember that you can be proud to be a Jew."

Dreidel Tournament

You have a little dreidel – so use it! Pull the neighbours, young and old, together for a dreidel tournament. Break into teams of three and four and get spinning. We use candy as prizes. (It's best to use something wrapped since it will be touched by lots of little hands.)

You can purchase dreidels in bulk from Judaica.com, or, often, at your local synagogue's gift shop. It adds to the excitement when you have dreidels of various sizes and colours.

If you're particularly serious about dreidel-playing, I found a website for a "Chai stakes" dreidel tournament that breaks down the "official" rules and regulations for "World Series Dreidel." In my house, however, we seem to do better when the children are free to cry over spinning too many Hebrew-letter shins (put two antes in the centre), and the prize is Hershey's candy kisses.

Talk About the Miracle

As Arnold's children have gotten older, he uses the 30 minutes required to sit around the Chanukah candles as a way to discuss the miracles of the holiday and some of its more esoteric significance.

"When HaShem created the world there were no stars or planets. The *or* – the light – was a non-physical *or*. That *or*, the light of God, is what the Yevanim (Greeks) were trying to knock out of the world," Arnold explains. "I tell my children that we can use HaShem's light like a soldier uses night vision goggles… to see His hidden miracles, to appreciate the spiritual light."

Shop – For Someone in Need

Rebecca Katz of Overland Park, Kan., remembers that as a child, she and her family would work with a local charity to receive the names of local families in need – Jewish and non-Jewish. Then, she and her siblings would be given those families' holiday wish lists and go shopping for them (instead of for themselves). Once the gifts were purchased, they would hand wrap them and deliver them in person.

"I remember one year, we got to this family, went upstairs and they had a tree, but it was completely empty underneath," Katz says. "We put all the gifts there and it was so unexpected. The children were so happy."

Re-enact the Chanukah Story

Younger children can enjoy a game of dress-up. If you have enough kids or can get classmates involved, a re-enactment of the Chanukah story can add to the spirit of the eight days. Kids enjoy dressing up in togas (just use some old sheets) and wielding plastic swords and shields. To make it easier, use a book, such as *The Story of Chanukah* by Norma Simon, as a guide.

If your own children don't want to dress up and tell the Chanukah story, Chabad.org has a large collection of Chanukah videos that both educate and entertain.

Sufganiyot

Chanukah is sweeter and oily-finger-lickin' good with homemade sufganiyot (deep-fried jelly doughnuts). Miriam Litt of Modi'in, Israel, recalls how she used to spend hours in the kitchen baking Chanukah doughnuts.

"I used real whipping cream and added pudding and then I would squirt it inside," she says.

Sometimes, she would get creative by mixing up the creamy flavours.

"I did my thing, and the kids – they sure liked eating it," Miriam says with a laugh. ■

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YOUNG DRIVERS

An eight-year-old Indiana Jones

CJN STAFF

An eight-year-old Israeli boy on a day trip with his family in the Beit Shemesh area accidentally made an important archeological discovery, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) announced last month.

Itai Halpern of Pardesiya was granted a certificate of honour after discovering the head of a statue from the First Temple period and turning it over to Antiquities Authorities' officials. Halpern's school class was also invited to take part in an archaeological dig.

Halpern was hiking with his family when he picked up a round object from the ground. He soon realized that the ceramic object was the head of a sculpture.

The family quickly reported their discovery to the Antiquities Authority. Archaeologist Alexander Glick met the family and informed them that they had made a discovery of historical significance. Itai told Glick that he had recently seen an Indiana Jones movie and wanted to be like him when he grows up. Finding the statue was a dream come true for Itai.

Itai Halpern shows off the ceramic sculpture. ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY/ISRAEL SUN PHOTOS

Alon de Groot, an IAA expert on the Iron Age, identified the finding as the head of a sculpture of a fertility goddess.

"Figurines of this kind, depicting naked women which symbolize fertility, were common in the homes of residents of the Kingdom of Judah from the eighth century BCE until the destruction of the Kingdom by the Babylonians in the days of Zedekiah [586 BCE]," he said.

De Groot added that "these figurines serve in our research as a marker for the area controlled by the Kingdom of Judah."

Archeologist Ana Irich said that the area of Beit Shemesh where the figurine was discovered was a known residential area in the First Temple period. "Beit Shemesh is mentioned as a city in the area of the Tribe of Judah." ■

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Could the next unmanned mission to the moon be Israeli?

MICHAEL FRIEDSON
JERUSALEM

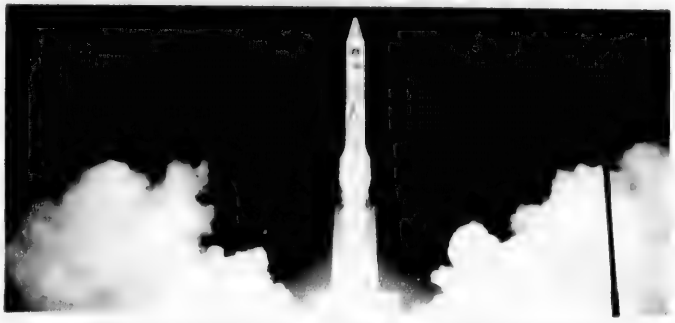
Israel is known globally as a high-tech nation, producing some of the most up to date commercial utilities in a variety of fields. At the same time, it is a leading weapons exporter, researching and constructing its own military capabilities, including a number of missile systems.

What is less well known is that these two characteristics have combined to make Israel the smallest member of a very special club of nations – the potential space travelling states.

Today there are only two countries in the world that have the infrastructure to put astronauts into space: China and Russia. The United States, the first nation to put a man on the moon, lost its capability in 2011 though it has plans to regain the ability. But there is a small club of nine additional states that have the technology to independently launch unmanned missions into space.

Israel currently has 15 civilian satellites orbiting the earth. Two-thirds are observation devices, and the remainder are communications platforms. The Jewish state specializes in "lightweight high-performance satellites" carrying devices that can compete with American satellites' capacity ion image resolution while weighing one-tenth the weight, Yitzhak Ben-Israel, chair of the Israeli Space Agency at the Ministry of Science, told the *Media Line*.

As with many of Israel's high-tech enterprises, the civilian space industry benefits from the country's military efforts. Both in terms of human capital – knowledge and expertise – and in infrastructure and investment, the Israel Space Agency profits from military programs that came before it, Ben-Israel said. "Although they are two different entities, the Israeli space industry and the Ministry of Defence, we don't have two separate production lines."



The Israeli military spy satellite Ofek 10 is seen being launched in April 2014 from the Palmachim army base, outside of Tel Aviv. FLASH90 PHOTO

It is notable that the Israeli space rocket, the Shavit (Hebrew for comet), is built from technologies believed to be based on the Jericho II ballistic missile.

Although Israel is not part of efforts to conduct manned space operations, it is keen to contribute to the exploration of the solar system.

"Human landings are too big for us. We have from time to time had human missions with the U.S.A. and we would like to have more in the future," Ben-Israel said, adding that negotiations are taking place with NASA to facilitate this. The Curiosity rover – currently trundling across the surface of Mars – was built with subsystems developed and constructed in Israel, Ben-Israel said. An idiosyncrasy of Israel's indigenous launch program is that rockets taking off from Palmachim Air Force Base do so in a westward direction, travelling out over the Mediterranean Sea. This removes the danger of debris falling on populated areas and removes the necessity for the Shavit to travel over any of Israel's neighbours. As the Earth spins on its axis in an eastwardly direction, this means that the rocket has to work harder to get into orbit, resulting in a 30 per cent reduction in payload-lift capacity.

This will not be a problem for SpaceIL, Israel's next venture into space, as the non-governmental program has secured a lift skyward from a launch site in the United States.

SpaceIL is one of 15 organizations competing in the Google Lunar X Prize competition, a contest to place a vehicle on the moon by 2017. SpaceIL became the first of the groups to secure a launch contract – with SpaceX, a commercial transport service that conducts logistics runs into orbit for NASA.

This means there is a very real possibility that the next mission to the moon might be Israeli, albeit not state-owned.

The industry appears to be moving in the direction of private companies and non-profit organizations and away from the previously state-dominated model for space exploration, Deganit Paikowsky, a senior researcher at the Yuval Neeman Workshop for Science, Technology and Security, at Tel Aviv University, told the *Media Line*.

This new direction is one in which Israel, the "startup nation" with an abundance of entrepreneurial spirit, could do well, Paikowsky said.

In Israel, the space industry and the startup sectors are closely connected, she explained, saying that Israel's space capability is tied into the startup nation idea, and they feed one another.

However, regarding the next big prize, getting astronauts to Mars, commercialization of the efforts might not bring the next "giant leap" any nearer, Paikowsky cautioned. "I'm not sure if it will shorten the duration of time for that." ■

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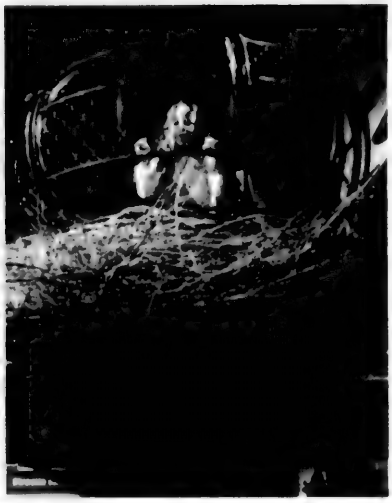

The Old State Capitol Building was built in 1892 and has been home to the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction since 1906. At the Pacific Northwest-themed Hands On Children's Museum, kids can play in a reconstructed bald eagle's nest. LAUREN KRAMER PHOTOS

Most small Jewish communities decrease in size over the summer, but not Olympia, Wash. The city's Jewish population swells by up to 600 as youth from all over the Pacific Northwest and as far afield as Las Vegas converge by bus and plane on Camp Solomon Schechter, a Jewish camp founded 60 years ago.

Located on 180 lush acres filled with trails, wetlands and towering maple forests, Camp Schechter boasts a trout-filled lake, hot water showers and heated dormitories. It's a version of "roughing it" specially designed for Jewish kids!

I ventured to Olympia, a five-hour drive from Vancouver, on a stormy, grey Friday in November, looking for a weekend away from home. Camp Schechter's sunny season was well behind us, and any leisure activities were going to be determinedly indoors. Still, I witnessed a city of 48,000 with a lively, active Jewish community, two synagogues and a Chabad presence.

My daughter Maya and I stayed in the downtown core and were thrilled to attend Friday night services at Temple Beth Hatfiloh, a Reconstructionist synagogue housed in a beautiful building on 8th Avenue downtown. The rabbi was out of town, and the service, led by lay leaders and attended by locals with a good turnout of comparative religions students, was filled with song.

Afterward, at the Oneg in the dining area, I learned that the synagogue building had once been home to the Church of Christian Science and was purchased, renovated and converted into a synagogue 12 years ago. Walk into the sanctuary, with its high ceilings, elegant Aron Kodesh and stained glass windows, and you'd never know it started its life in another of the world's great religions.

Olympia is a stately, historic city filled with soaring examples of Greco-Roman architecture and irresistibly browsable book shops, galleries and boutiques. Washington's version of Victoria, it spreads in an elegant square on either side of Budd Inlet, its beautiful state buildings on a bluff over the ocean and its 278-foot capitol dome visible from most everywhere. There are daily tours of the capitol dome, and we gladly joined one led by Ed Smith, a history teacher whose father had once served in the legislature. He primed our small group on the ornate granite, European marble, carved masonry and more than 300 Tiffany lights and chandeliers that decorate the palatial interior. It's an impressive place and one that certainly lends gravity to Washington's history and the business of lawmaking.

It was less than fascinating for a six-year-old, though, which is why our next stop was the very antidote: the Hands On Children's Museum of Olympia. These days, almost every city has a generic children's museum – but this one is far from generic.

"Our goal was to only feature exhibits from the Pacific Northwest, things children might see in their own backyards," said Jillian Henze, communications manager for the 28,000-square-foot museum.

Best suited to the three-to-eight-year-old crowd, this innovative space delves into the farm-to-fork eating experience, the Puget Sound waterway, the forest and the life cycle of water. Children learn how currents flow, how large a bald eagle's nest really is, how water and wind pressure work, how to build a house and where food comes from. My daughter Maya had to be dragged out of the museum at closing time.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Happy & Joyous Chanukah

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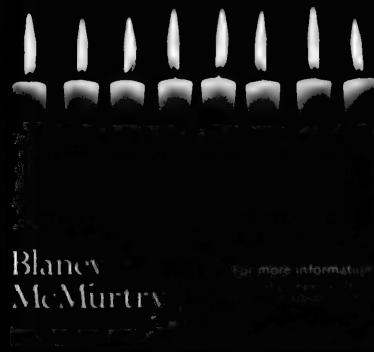

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At left, the Tenino Depot Museum, on the right, the Olympia State Capitol's majestic pinnacle rises above the city. LAUREN KRAMER PHOTOS

If you go:

- *For general information on Olympia surf to VisitOlympia.com*
- *The Hands On Children's Museum, the busiest children's museum in the state, is open daily until 5 p.m. and admission is $10.95. Admission is free on the first Friday evening of every month from 5-9 p.m. Info: www.hocm.org; 360-956-0818*
- *Free tours of the Washington State Legislative Building run every hour on the hour from 10-3 weekdays and 11-3 on weekends.*
- *You have to stay to play at Great Wolf Lodge, where accommodation starts around $210 a night for a family of 4-6 and includes water park passes. Info: greatwolf.com; 866-798-9653*
- *Getting to Olympia from Vancouver is a straight shot on the I-5, 276 km south of the Peace Arch Border Crossing.*

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

We left Olympia the next day for Grand Mound, 20 minutes away and home to Great Wolf Lodge, Washington's equivalent to Disneyland. The massive indoor waterpark is a kids' paradise, with waterslides that sweep riders on circuitous watery journeys, a large wave pool and two well-designed water play structures – one for toddlers and the other for kids seven and younger.

There's easily enough entertainment in the waterpark alone for a half-day. But once you dry off, there's more to do in the rest of the resort. Kids were running around with wands, pointing them at treasure chests and learning their way around a game that lasts four-to-six hours and occupies them for the duration of their stay. Great Wolf is a hedonistic kids' experience from which parents emerge looking flushed and exhausted from the combination of heat, chlorine and noise. By contrast, their kids come out starry-eyed and determined to return.

We took the long road back to Olympia on Old Highway 99 to get a glimpse of Tenino, a sleepy city with a fascinating history. I was anxious to learn about Tenino's sandstone legacy, which dates back to 1888 with the discovery of a large deposit of sandstone – a valuable commodity in the pre-concrete era.

In the four decades that followed, Tenino quarries supplied sandstone for buildings in San Francisco and Vancouver, among others. The quarries closed in the late 1920s but one of them, the Tenino Stone Company Quarry, was deliberately flooded with water from natural springs by the City of Tenino. It became a 95-foot-deep swimming pool with beautiful, terraced walls that bear evidence of its history.

Unfortunately, most of that history remained an enigma because the doors of the Tenino Depot Museum, usually open on the weekends, were shuttered when we were in town. That's the problem with sleepy cities, particularly in November. They tend to go into a long hibernation. ■

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Gonna light this candle without a flame

VIVA SARAH PRES
JERUSALEM

While the Swedish band NoNoNo sang *Fire without a Flame*, Israel's Candle Touch is proving you can light a flame without fire.

The app-enabled Candle Touch is a real wax-scented candle that can be controlled by any smart IOS or Android device loaded with the app.

The user simply places a Candle Touch wax block – available in vanilla, lavender, melon, lemongrass, amber and patchouli scents – in the black or white clean-design case, and clicks on the app to light a real flame via Bluetooth. You can light any number of candles at once.

The device is charged through a USB cable and each 10x11x10-centimetre candle gives 55 to 70 hours of burning time. Extinguish the flame instantly through a command, by setting a timer, by blowing air into the smartphone's speaker or by leaving the 30-foot Bluetooth communication range.

The product, which is not yet on sale, was recently introduced at Web Summit 2015 in Dublin, in its showcase of international early startups. Candle Touch was chosen by the *Irish Times* as one of the five rising stars among 2,400 startups at the convention. CEO and cofounder Moshe Lev tells *ISRAEL21c*.

The Candle Touch is a real wax-scented candle that can be controlled by a phone.

"The crowd and journalists were very excited about our product," says Lev. "Candles are one of the oldest inventions in history that haven't changed at all over the course of thousands of years... It's time to integrate the authenticity of the candle with today's world technological progress to get a new safe, easy to use and technologically advanced candle."

> *The Candle Touch prevents lives and homes being destroyed due to candles left unattended.*

The four-person Candle Touch team from Rishon LeZion spent two years creating this smart, patent-pending technology for everything from home to wedding décor.

It adds a welcome layer of safety to the ambiance of candles. Statistics provided by Fire Prevention Canada show that fire kills on average eight people a week in Canada, and residential fires account for 73 per cent of these fatalities.

"The Candle Touch prevents lives and homes being destroyed due to candles left unattended by detecting when a person falls asleep or leaves the house and extinguishing the candle when that happens," says Lev.

The Candle Touch team is now preparing a Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign to raise financing, and will also announce the price of the new candle. ■

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On Chanukah, just let the lights go out

EDMON J. RODMAN
JTA, LOS ANGELES

There's a popular Chanukah song recorded by Peter, Paul and Mary, *Light One Candle*. Its chorus insists we "don't let the light go out" – but I've been thinking that maybe we should.

Not that I want to leave all those Maccabee children stumbling in the dark on cold December nights, or leave them without an image of light and hope to plug into. But, sometimes, letting the light go out kindles an altogether different kind of luminance in which to examine the moments of our lives that we hold dear.

So my urging that we watch the light go out is a literal one – while we love to bask in the glow of our menorahs, what is really illuminating is watching the candles go out. Watching them burn out, one by one, makes me think about how remarkable it is to kindle light.

In a time when LED menorah decorations are plentiful and one can use an app to light the "candles" on their smartphone, please give me candles blue, yellow, red and white. The fire of my imagination lights up as their wicks burn down.

One Chanukah – after our family menorah was lit, the blessings chanted, the songs sung, the gifts opened – everyone trudged upstairs to watch TV. I stayed downstairs alone and watched the menorah burn low. Though the communal and commercial push on Chanukah is toward shopping-mall candlelightings, house parties and group crafts for kids, I wanted to see if the holiday could also be quiet and contemplative.

> *The fire of my imagination lights up as their wicks burn down.*

I'm not talking "silent night" here – that's that other holiday – but a real chance to take in the play of shadow and light and contemplate what Chanukah means.

The Jewish life cycle, from bris or baby naming to funeral and shivah, leaves little time for singular reflection. Judaism calls for a group, a minyan, to experience much of what it offers. Even on Yom Kippur, we do not confess our sins alone, but together as community.

So I admit that sitting alone and watching the candles burn down seemed a little downbeat and weird at first.

But the traditional prayer *Hanerot Halalu* (*These Lights*) – which reminds us, as we look upon the candles, to thank and praise God "for the wondrous miracle of our deliverance" – helped me view this solo experience in a different, well, light. While watching the flames, I finally connected with the words of the prayer, realizing that after eight nights of parties and presents (as well as latkes, sufganiyot and black cherry soda), I felt miraculously delivered, like I was a Maccabee who emerged victorious from the combat zones of holiday shopping.

Casting a shadow on my reverie, however, was the *Chanukah Meditation* in my Sim Shalom prayer book. It suggested that "in the last glimmer of spiralling flame," I should be able to see the spark of "Maccabees, martyrs, men and women of valour."

Try as I might, staring at the candles burning down, all I could make out were colorful driblets of wax.

I wondered: was there some other message?

Flames reach out at us from most every part of Judaism. Looking into our menorahs, they can draw us into a light of memory, like a yahrzeit candle lit at the anniversary of a loved one's death. Flames also light us up with celebration, such as illuminating the candles of Shabbat or setting bonfires on Lag b'Omer.

In the window of my dining room, another candle connection was burning up right before me. The shamash, the candle used to light all the others on the menorah, was burning out first, making me ask: who had been my shamash? Taking bows in the candlelight were a basketball coach, a college lecturer, the rabbi where I grew up, a kid from Scouts and, to a well-earned round of applause, my parents. In turn, they had showed me how to move my feet, write, parse Torah commentary, cook and strive toward menschhood.

In the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the Book of Creation, the earliest foundation text of Kabbalah, there is a passage about a "flame in a burning coal." Aryeh Kaplan, an Orthodox rabbi who was known for his knowledge of physics and Kabbalah, wrote that it can be used as a meditation. In his book *Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation in Theory and Practice*, various parts of the flame correspond to the Sephirot, or attributes through which Ein Sof — "the infinite" — is revealed.

In Rabbi Kaplan's meditation, the wick represents the physical world; the blue flame closest to the wick is "the counterpart of Malchut," or Kingdom, which is our perceptions of God's actions and attributes. Surrounding this is the bright yellow flame, which corresponds to the Sephirot of Kindness, Strength, Beauty, Victory, Splendour and Foundation.

The hottest part, the white flame, is the Sephira of Binah, or understanding, with the "light radiating from the candle," corresponding to Chochmah, or wisdom.

"The only way in which the flame can rise is for all of these parts to come together," Rabbi Kaplan wrote.

And rise they did, growing brighter first, and then sputtering out, one by one, but leaving me with a glow. ■

Edmon J. Rodman is a JTA columnist who writes on Jewish life from Los Angeles. Contact him at edmojace@gmail.com.

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From tragedy to celebration

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ISRAEL 21C

Photos and videos of newlyweds Sarah-Tehiya Litman and Ariel Beigel celebrating their wedding in Jerusalem continue to move the world to tears. Litman's father and brother were murdered in a Nov. 13 terrorist shooting attack – just three days before the planned nuptials.

Litman and Beigel had to postpone their Nov. 16 wedding so that Litman could sit shivah for her father, Yaakov, and her 18-year-old brother, Netanel.

When they announced the new Nov. 26 date for their celebration, they said they hoped "multitudes will come to make us happy."

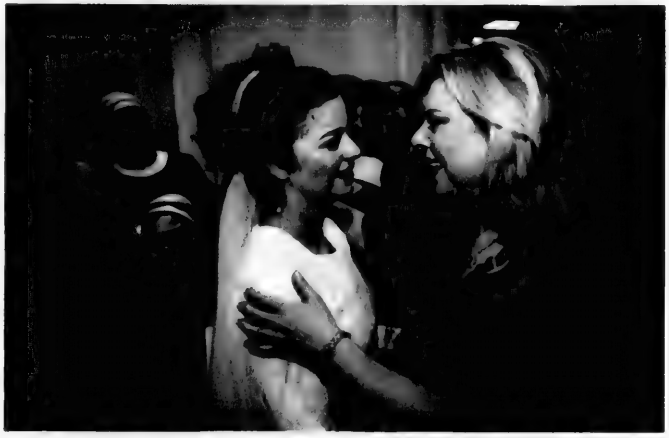
And that's exactly what happened.

Sara Netanyahu, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's wife, came to offer her best wishes. So did hundreds of other well-wishers who had seen the couple's open invitation on social media that included the verse from the Prophet Micah: "Do not rejoice over me, my enemy, for I have fallen but I have gotten up."

Jewish communities from Australia to Canada, and Chabad Houses from across the globe, sent representatives to the open wedding.

"We join in the deep resolve of this couple that terror not define our lives, and that goodness and kindness and joy fight the wave of darkness and despair that seems so overwhelming," said Rabbi Aaron Slonim, executive director of the Rohr Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life at the State University of New York at Binghamton.

The wedding took place at the International Convention Center in Jerusalem. ■



Sara Netanyahu was among the guests who attended Sarah-Tehiya Litman and Ariel Beigel's wedding. FLASH 90 PHOTOS

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Medical clowns' work steeped in smiles and research

JEFFREY F. BARKEN
JNS.ORG

Lev Leytzan medical clowns bring laughter to their patients. LEV LEYTZAN PHOTO

"You treat a disease, you win, you lose. You treat a person, I guarantee you, you'll win, no matter what the outcome," the late actor Robin Williams says in the 1998 film *Patch Adams*, which shed light on the life of influential physician, social activist, comedian and clown Hunter Doherty Adams.

Today, although doctors can't promise miracles, there is mounting evidence that laughter – applied pragmatically in diverse settings – can heal. And as it turns out, Patch Adams has a Jewish counterpart in the New York City area.

Israeli researchers, led by Dr. Shevach Friedler at the Assaf Harofeh Medical Center's in-vitro fertilization (IVF) unit, published results in 2011 from a study examining the impact of medical clowning on patients struggling to bear children. Women who undergo IVF experience tremendous stress. Partners lament the absence of intimacy during IVF, the procedure remains costly, and perceived infertility brings a heavy emotional toll.

The study tested the hypothesis that stress diminishes the effectiveness of IVF, positing that exposure to medical clowns shortly after an embryo transfer (ET) procedure may reduce the patient's stress level, thereby enabling successful impregnation.

Among 219 patients participating in the study, 110 were in the clown intervention group; the other 109 women were in the control group. Friedler's team observed 16 per cent improvement in the IVF success rate for the women entertained by clowns.

Dr. Neal Goldberg finds such results encouraging. His wife was a pioneer recipient of IVF treatment, and his four children were all the result of successful ET procedures performed when the science was still in its infancy.

"The study coming out of Israel really corroborated my theory, emphasizing that humour can help couples deal with the lack of intimacy," Goldberg told *JNS.org*.

Goldberg is the founder and executive director of Lev Leytzan (Hebrew for "Heart of a Clown"), an organization based in Lawrence, N.Y., which initiates collaboration between medical professionals and a highly trained troupe of therapeutic clowns. Lev Leytzan brings clowning to hospitals, nursing homes, senior centres, camps for people with special needs, and private homes in the United States and abroad. Since founding the organization in 2003, Goldberg has helped train nearly 1,000 clowns. Many are volunteers as young as 12. Others are paid professionals.

"We're not an entertainment troupe," Goldberg said. "We're trying to create meaningful, creative engagement with people."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Lev Leytzan medical clowns, at left and centre, are seen with a child patient. LEV LEYTZAN PHOTO

Initially, the focus was to "work with Jewish youths in our community and expose them to the greater world at large," he said.

Lev Leytzan began by taking clowns to Israel to help terror victims. The organization later added missions to Europe, where the clowns provide therapy for Holocaust survivors. Now, Goldberg's team is focused on duplicating the success the Israeli IVF study achieved. Likewise, Goldberg is expanding his vision for medical clowning, embracing another ailing community: senior citizens.

Lev Leytzan doctors and clowns recently launched a pilot geriatric patient-focused program called ElderHearts. The stated goal is to provide "Alzheimer's and dementia patients with interactive experiences designed to help them reconnect with the world and alleviate the loneliness and isolation they feel."

Before tackling the most severely affected patients, however, Lev Leytzan is taking a more general approach, assessing the effectiveness of its methodology.

The clowns work in pairs. They enter only with the patient's permission, and they allow the patient or the doctor to lead off. To establish a familiar role, the clowns wear vintage costumes and use props from the 1930s through the 1950s, artifacts that evoke rich memories.

> *A spoonful of humour makes the medicine go down.*

"We join them in their reality, [utilizing] problem-solving, reminiscence and improvisation," Goldberg said. When "one Alzheimer's patient refused to take her medications," he recounted, offering an example of the clowns in action, "we threw a tea party, began toasting old friends and old times while we carved the cake, and the patient swallowed her pills." Indeed, a spoonful of humour makes the medicine go down.

"Unlike most people in the hospital, we are not bound by time or space or reality," Goldberg said. "We can spend as much time as we like. We talk to the nurses and staff beforehand, find out who has had a rough day and needs cheering."

The medical and psychosocial teams (graduate and doctoral students) at the Margaret Tietz Nursing and Rehabilitation in Jamaica, N.Y., observe the Lev Leytzan clowns and collect data.

ElderHearts may require adjustments in strategy and narrower parameters before an official study like the one conducted in Israel yields meaningful quantitative data. But in the meantime, the program's troupe of students, doctors and volunteers are, at the very least, putting smiles on the faces of senior citizens in need.

Thanks to Lev Leytzan, "I can visit people who are lonely, in pain and extremely vulnerable," says Natan Davidowitz, a 12th-grade student based in West Hempstead, N.Y., and a regular volunteer clown.

Davidowitz says he is enthusiastic about wearing makeup and smiling "shamelessly, [to] make people in hospitals feel like they are important enough for someone to spend time with them in a way that solely focuses on making them happy."

Patch Adams would call that a "win," regardless of the outcome of medical treatment. ■

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Inside

Controversy swirls around Omar Alghabra

Canadian Jews question Liberal MP's views on Israel and terrorism.
PAGE 12

Canadian Jews dump on Trump

Groups condemn U.S. presidential hopeful's anti-Muslim remarks.
PAGE 18

Weekend

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:17 p.m.	5:26 p.m.
Montreal	3:54 p.m.	5:03 p.m.
Ottawa	4:02 p.m.	5:12 p.m.
Toronto	4:24 p.m.	5:31 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:10 p.m.	5:25 p.m.
Calgary	4:12 p.m.	5:29 p.m.
Vancouver	3:57 p.m.	5:11 p.m.

Mixed messages on campus

Are Jewish groups and university administrators doing enough to help Jewish students feel safe? Are things quieting down on Canadian campuses? The answers depend on whom you ask. **PAGE 8**

Christmas envy? Not for me

Jay Teitel reveals how resisting that other holiday made him the man he is today. **PAGE 7**

A wedding in the shadow of tragedy

Rabbi Mark Fishman explains why he went to Israel to dance in defiance of terror. **PAGE 16**

The festival of light... sabres

The Chanukah story didn't take place in a "galaxy far, far away." Or did it? **PAGE 34**

Christians and Jews trade niceties, and Israel helps ex-president beat cancer

Interfaith warm and fuzzies

It's been an month of breakthroughs for Christian-Jewish relations. On Dec. 3, 25 prominent Orthodox rabbis in Israel, Europe and the United States signed a document published by the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation in Israel titled "To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians" that calls for "appreciating the religious value of Christianity." Then, on Dec. 10, the Vatican issued a report saying clearly for the first time that Catholics shouldn't work to convert Jews, who can attain salvation in their own faith. It also urged the church to help eliminate anti-Semitism.

Carter has Jewish state on the brain

A U.S. cancer drug that was researched and tested in Israel helped former U.S. president Jimmy Carter beat life-threatening melanoma – an irony flagged on social media because of his criticism of Israel's treatment of Palestinians in recent years. Carter, 91, said Dec. 6 four cancerous lesions on his brain were gone and doctors found no new signs of cancer. He also said he'll keep taking Keytruda, a new immunotherapy drug that helps the immune system stop cancer's spread. It was researched by Jacob Schachter at Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan. Bolstering the immune system differs from chemotherapy, which destroys cancerous cells and healthy ones. Experts said it's not clear the drug cured Carter on its own – he also had chemotherapy – and that the cancer has been known to return.

Kaia and clan in happier times. FACEBOOK PHOTO

Maybe she doesn't like Canadians

Veterinary authorities quarantined Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's family dog after she bit an MK at a Chanukah party. The dog, Kaia, was seized Dec. 10 after she bit Sharren Haskel of Likud, Israel's first Canadian-born lawmaker, as well as another person the day before at the prime minister's home. Kaia bit Netanyahu in July, after he adopted her, but wasn't quarantined, though he was given precautionary rabies shots. Described by the family as "kind and friendly," Kaia, who is 10 years old, has bad hearing that makes her startle and sometimes bite when approached from behind. ■

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTO FROM THE CJN ARCHIVES

Gematria

1.7 Million

The number of Israelis in poverty, making Israel the second poorest country in the OECD, behind Mexico.

16'4"

The height in feet of a Lego menorah in Fort Worth, Texas, made of almost 50,000 pieces, that set an unofficial record (its makers balked at Guinness' $11,000 verification fee).

Quotable

He hasn't called, but I have a certificate from him.

– Comedian Rabbi Robert Alper, who won a contest to become the Pope's new comedic adviser. See full interview on p. 38.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz continues his look at Israel's emergency responders.

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Letters to the Editor

Another look at tuition hikes

Rabbi Jay Kelman writes passionately about school funding ("How to leave a lasting legacy for Jewish education," Nov. 26). The burden on parents is escalating far faster than inflation or rise in earnings. Schemes like Rabbi Kelman's to run down endowment funds or raid retirement nest eggs rely on non-renewable fossil money that, once depleted, is gone forever.

Efforts to gain state support for supplementary needs such as speech therapy ("CIJA renews effort to alleviate school funding squeeze," Nov. 19) can only chip away at the problem, but will not provide any significant relief. These approaches cannot work in the long run, and a more sustainable model must be developed.

It's easy to moan, but what can we, individually and collectively, do? We must begin by recognizing that government funding is not going to be forthcoming in the foreseeable future. We must live within our means.

We need greater transparency from the schools. Many parties have contributed to the agonizing deliberations in these pages regarding the tuition crisis. The schools, however, have been very reticent in explaining how subsidies are calculated, or why huge annual increases are necessary.

Are we supporting bloated non-teaching administrations? How much duplication is there in running independent offices for each school? Are there economies to be had by merging non-teaching operations or by forming a group-purchasing organization to negotiate better deals with suppliers?

We need to develop a spirit of volunteerism that encourages contributions in kind by parents and students. There is a wealth of talent and skills that we can tap to reduce costs, whether it's help at drop-off, security, or professional services. Parents' and grandparents' special expertise or interests must be leveraged to provide enriching experiences in many areas.

Ariel Untrob
Toronto

Contest in poor taste

I read the report about Miss Holocaust Survivor several times before I actually believed that a story of this type, one that personifies the pinnacle of poor taste, could be found in the paper ("Still beautiful," Dec. 3). Running a beauty contest that capitalizes on the murder of six million innocent victims is something I never dreamt could happen. How about Miss Slave Labour or Mr. Crematorium? Miss Starvation or Miss Yellow Star of David could be some good choices.

Mortimer Levy
Montreal

Israel and its ties with the EU

It is about time that Israel suspended diplomatic ties with the European Union. Israel, in its unceasing battle with Middle East-based terrorist organizations, has for decades effectively buttressed Europe's back door against these murderous thugs. By failing to support Israel, Europe is now reaping the whirlwind of its cowardly acquiescence to the terrorists, evidently hoping that "by feeding the crocodile it would eat them last." Dinner time is now upon them.

It is also way past time for Israel and all of the other nations of the erstwhile free world to at last cease their memberships in the United Nations, which has long since been hijacked by despotically run, West-hating, terrorism-fomenting, anti-Israel nations. The former should stop their financial contributions to this gang of nations that overtly and unwaveringly pursue their campaigns to undermine and ultimately destroy societies with any semblance of open democracy and human rights. And the United States should summarily boot the UN from its New York location and dispatch it to any one of the rogue countries where it will feel much more at home.

David Green
Thornhill, Ont.

Question of the week

What was the most memorable Jewish story of 2015?

Let us know in 150 words or less at cjninfo@gmail.com

Letters to the editor are welcome in English or French. All letters must bear the sender's name, address and telephone number. We reserve the right to edit and condense letters.

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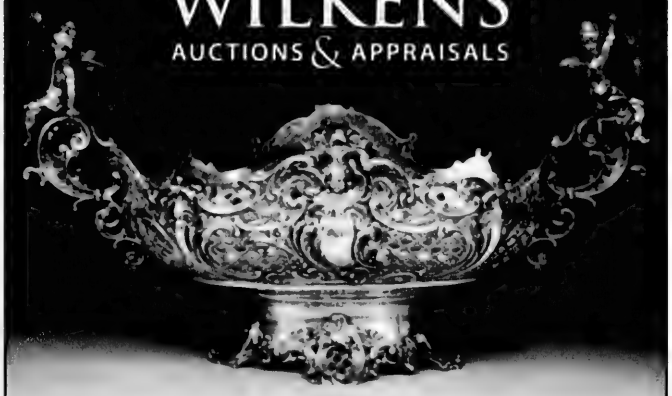

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To speak up or stay silent

Judaism has the power to bring a moral voice to any issue , but what are rabbis' parameters for activism, and when should they take a stand from the pulpit?

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Cutler: Recently, 1,000 American rabbis signed a letter encouraging the U.S. Congress to welcome Syrian refugees to the United States. I often receive solicitations to add my name to petitions on all sorts of issues, ranging from Israel and environment concerns to the death penalty and doctor-assisted death. I imagine that you do as well.

As religious leaders, I believe that it is incumbent upon us to join the public debate and use our moral voices for good. At the same time, such petitions generate concerns. When an issue has a strong partisan quality, is it appropriate to speak up? When should I fear alienating my community? And more broadly, what differentiates a rabbi from a prophet?

Rabbi Scheier: Your questions cut to the core of what it means to be a congregational rabbi in the 21st century. Equal in importance to our engagement with traditional Jewish texts is our engagement with the social and political issues of the day.

Our voices need to be heard when it comes to contemporary issues. The media that our congregants consume doesn't recognize borders – who in our community isn't following the drama of the American election cycle? The issues we discuss should be those that matter to us and inform our Jewish lives, regardless of whether they emerge from events outside our immediate communities.

For an activist rabbi, Judaism has the power to bring a moral voice to any issue, and signing petitions is one way to exercise this voice.

What are your parameters of activism? When do you believe, as a rabbi, it's important to speak up, and when should one remain silent?

Rabbi Cutler: Ecclesiastes teaches that there is "a time to be silent and a time to speak." Unfortunately, Ecclesiastes doesn't give guidance as to which situations merit which response.

Each situation becomes a judgment call. I ask myself: will my voice make a difference? Does engaging this time mean I will be more or less effective the next time? How will I see myself in 20 years if I don't speak up?

Rabbis engage in activism in a variety of ways. One of which is from the pulpit. It can be a powerful venue to encourage a community to engage with an important issue. Some sermons take an issue about which our community is divided, and the role of an (activist) rabbi is to argue for a particular side. In such a situation, the rabbi serves as an authentic Jewish voice – indeed, the voice that a particular community has chosen as its Jewish guide.

Other sermons address issues about which there exists near-communal consensus. In those instances, the rabbi spends less time arguing for a particular side (none of our congregants, for example, are pro-genocide, so rabbis need not spend time arguing why genocide is wrong) and behaves more as a community organizer, encouraging congregants to take action.

My ordination certificate refers to me as a "teacher and preacher." When I speak on issues about which there is not yet consensus, I feel that I am acting more as a teacher. When I address issues about which consensus exists, I feel that my role is closer to that of a preacher.

Rabbi Scheier: I am reminded of the joke about the rabbi who proposes to speak about intermarriage, kashrut or Shabbat. "No," the synagogue president says, "those topics are too contentious and might offend members of the congregation." "What, then, should I discuss?" the rabbi wonders. "Judaism!" responds the president.

I suppose my parameters for discussing "hot-button issues" are a) whether or not I can express a unique approach based on Jewish thought, and b) whether the topic is sufficiently stimulating to the members of my community to foment further conversation.

I have a friend who is a rabbi in the American South. Whenever I share an insight that he likes, he'll tell me, "As we say down here: 'That'll preach!'"

The instinct of knowing what will "preach" is not something to which we can apply objective parameters. It is something, perhaps, that we learn over time, through the inevitable journey of trial and error. As you taught, Ecclesiastes doesn't specify which is a time to speak and which is a time for silence: the application of this verse is our responsibility. ■

How to reach us

Vol. XLV, No. 49 (2,225)*

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Subscription Inquiries: 416-932-5095
Toll Free: 1-866-849-0864 **Fax:** 416-932-2488
E-mail: cjncontact@gmail.com
Sales, National & Toronto Local: Canadian Primedia, 416-922-3605

Israeli Advertising Representative:
IMP, Tel: 02-625-2933, E-mail: info@impmedia.co.il

Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation:
July 14, 2015

Canadian Heritage / Patrimoine canadien

Postmaster: Please return 29Bs and changes of address to CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7.
Postage Paid at Toronto Canada Post Publication Agreement #40010684
*Under current ownership

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage

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CJN

An independent community newspaper serving as a forum for diverse viewpoints

Publisher and Proprietor: The Canadian Jewish News, a corporation without share capital. Head Office: 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord Ont. L4K 2L7

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SeeJN | Envoy hosts Governor General

On the third night of Chanukah, Gov. Gen. David Johnston, left, joined Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak, right, and Rabbi Reuven Bulka, rabbi emeritus of Ottawa's Congregation Machzikei Hadas, in a candlelighting ceremony at the ambassador's residence. They were joined by friends and Jewish community leaders.

SeeJN | Holiday on the Hill

Liberal MPs Anthony Housefather, second from right, and Michael Levitt, fourth from right, hosted the first Chanukah on the Hill celebration Dec. 9 under the new Liberal government. More than 200 people attended, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, right, Conservative MPs Lisa Raitt and Peter Kent, and NDP leader Tom Mulcair. Housefather and Levitt were joined by fellow Jewish MPs, from left, Karina Gould, Julie Dabrusin, David Graham, Dan Ruimy and Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr.

From Yoni's Desk

My favourite cover stories, part one

One of the best parts of my job is deciding what will grace the cover of *The Canadian Jewish News* each week. As 2015 draws to a close, here are some of my favourite cover stories from 2015:

1. Say What, Jan. 29: In the wake of the terror attacks on a kosher supermarket and the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, we explored the issue of free speech. Marni Soupcoff, executive director of the Canadian Constitution Foundation, argued that it's best to air, not muzzle, offensive opinions, while B'nai Brith Canada honorary counsel David Matas countered that incitement to hatred is different than blasphemy.

2. Jewish. Black. Canadian, Feb. 26: Moshe Modeira explained what it's like to be Jewish and black in a moving essay. "I had to be given a dual education in the richness of my Jewish heritage alongside reminders of the responsibility that comes with being a black man," he wrote. Elsewhere in that issue, we explored the state of black-Jewish dialogue in Canada, and looked back at the life of Emerson Swift, Canada's first black Jew.

3. Jewish high schools search for answers, March 26: After Ottawa's main community high school announced it would close due to low enrolment, Lila Sarick reported on the state of Jewish high schools across the country. School administrators in Winnipeg, Montreal and Toronto were very open about their struggles, but the news wasn't all bad: in Vancouver, where enrolment has improved over the past four years, King David High School co-president Ari Shiff outlined his strategies for overhauling the local Jewish day school system.

4. A time to be born, a time to die, May 14: Laying out the cold, hard facts, Lauren Kramer, investigated how much a Jewish funeral costs across the country. It turns out the price of a Jewish funeral varies significantly depending on where you live in Canada – in Ottawa, Halifax and Saskatoon, plots range from $2,400 to $12,000, while in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal the cost of a plot, headstone and burial can run beyond $30,000. The lesson: plan ahead, and start saving now.

5. Priced Out, June 18: The Jewish community is not immune to the effects of the housing bubble, as Sheri Shefa found out. In fact, soaring housing prices are affecting where Jews choose to settle, and in many cases, young families are being forced to live outside the traditional boundaries of the community.

6. When Jews come out of the closet, June 25: To mark Gay Pride Week, Jodie Shupac explored how coming out can place major strains on Jewish families. The issue remains such a taboo in the Jewish community that many are still unwilling to even discuss it. Still, some people are beginning to speak out, and Torontonian Marilyn Lazar is a case in point. She described celebrating Pride with her son: "He not only 'came out,'" she wrote, "he came in – he came into his own. He looked free, confident, happy and himself. What more could a mother ask?"

Read, or re-read, all of these cover stories right now at cjnews.com. Next week: six more cover stories that made waves in 2015. ■ — YONI

ESSAY

Resisting Christmas made me the man I am today

Jay Teitel

When my older sister was eight, she was so consumed with envy for the gentile kids in her Grade 3 class who got to celebrate Christmas that my parents, in a moment of weakness, decided to buy her a Christmas present.

The present appeared on the morning of Dec. 25, on the coffee table in our basement rec room, in front of the fireplace. It sat there, a solitary oblong box wrapped in red and green reindeer paper, with no accompanying card or other ID, a gift that dared to be known by context alone. My sister was beside herself with joy. I was six, and even then, it left me cold.

To be a non-Orthodox Jew in the western world is to be intimately acquainted with Christmas envy as practiced by the Chosen People, either as a sufferer or witness. I was a witness. Besides my sister, I saw it in certain friends of mine who actually enjoyed sitting on Santa's lap, and eventually on the faces of my own children when my wife and I took them to the mall to sit on Santa's lap, too (a creepy tradition for any child, it always struck me, let alone a Jewish one). I heard it in the voices of my wife and her sisters when they talked about looking in the holiday windows at various department stores (Yuletime lure seems to be stronger for Jewish females, for some reason), and how much they loved Christmas movies like *White Christmas* (directed by a Jew, co-written by a Jew, and co-starring a Jew), and Christmas songs like *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas* (written by a Jew).

I heard about it from friends with teenage daughters, who, like weird inversions of Marrano Jews secretly observing Passover in 15th-century Spain, were sneaking into their suburban basements to decorate clandestine Christmas trees. Meanwhile, the only Christmas movie scene I wanted to see didn't involve a kid named Ralphie putting his eye out with his new air rifle, but a kid named Susan (one of my sisters-in-law) being told, at the age of eight by the kid who lived across the street, that she had killed Christ. "How could I kill him?" she said. "I don't even know him."

I didn't just resist the siren call of Christmas, I enjoyed resisting it. It felt like a righteous act. This was probably due to a defensive haughtiness I'd affected, from an early age toward anyone who had anything I didn't have or couldn't get. So if the kid down the block got five bucks for allowance instead of the one dollar I got, that kid was fatally spoiled and doomed to be a shiftless failure, while I was being forged by my Spartan parents into a noble paragon of rock-solid values and infinite promise.

If I lived in humble Toronto instead of titanic New York, I would convince myself that Toronto was actually bigger than New York (this is the gospel truth), based on my observation that the Toronto phone book was actually thicker than the Manhattan phone book, the one that guy on *To Tell the Truth* could rip in half with his bare hands. (I had forgotten that Manhattan was one borough of five, each of which had a phone book as thick as Toronto's.)

And if the vast majority of the world enjoyed a juggernaut of a holiday called Christmas, which came equipped with monumental chutzpah and 7,000 replays of *The Little Drummer Boy*, then I would simply believe that our holiday, Chanukah, was 7,000 times better. How could it not be? Chanukah was about fighting and miracles and Judah the Maccabee pulling cedar trees out of the ground on horseback. Christmas was about one little Jewish kid's birthday.

The author says he doesn't have the kind of holiday envy that afflicts other Jews.

But there were things even I couldn't deny: the cultural power of the man in red, for one. One Pesach, when the time came for the kids to open the front door to let in the invisible prophet Elijah to drink his wine, the door swung wide to reveal my 11-year-old son, wearing a long cotton-batten beard, carrying a staff, and a sheet draped over his head. The seder crowd went wild, but my first thought was, "Hey, he looks like Santa."

So maybe I will grant Christmas its due. Maybe I will give it that much. But envy of Christmas proportions? Never. My Christmas-sized envy is reserved for larger existential challenges, like, for instance, the two people I spent most of my Chanukahs with while I was growing up, my cousins Jerry and David. Their father, my uncle, ran an ad agency, that counted among its clients the Disney corporation. This meant that at regular intervals, licensed Disney toys would show up at my cousins' house that hadn't made their way to the Canadian market yet, some of which hadn't been released anywhere yet.

Another of my uncle's clients had a connection with the National Hockey League. One year around Chanukah/Christmas time during the early 1960s (when pro sports teams still travelled by rail), Jerry and David got to take the train with the Montreal Canadiens from Toronto part way to Detroit, where the team was playing the Red Wings that night. (My cousin Jerry claims the train ride was his birthday party, not a Chanukah event, and that I was actually there. He remembers my "brush cut." He says he has "evidence," to which I can only reply, "Sure, Jer.")

My cousins personally met Habs legends Doug Harvey and Dickie Moore, and conspired – unsuccessfully – to steal Jacques Plante's goalie mask and throw it off the train. But when they told me about all this later, I just smiled and nodded, buoyed by the certain knowledge that their profligate indulgence was already sealing their destinies, that in adulthood while I was making my mark, they would be out on the street, their wills broken by privilege, homeless ne'er-do-wells, lost souls, bums.

They're both doctors. ■

Jay Teitel is an award-winning writer and co-inventor of the board game Therapy. He lives in Toronto.

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How bad is it on campus? Depends who you ask

Some students downplay anti-Israel rhetoric, while others bemoan a lack of action on the part of Jewish groups, university administrators

LILA SARICK
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A mural in the York University Student Centre in Toronto is a Rorschach test of sorts for thinking about anti-Semitism on Canadian campuses.

The painting is of a man with rocks in his hands, looking at a house and a bulldozer. On his back is a Palestinian flag with a map of Israel that does not show any borders. Underneath are the words "Peace" and "Justice"

Danielle Shachar, a fourth-year psychology student and active in Israel advocacy, passes by the painting most days and said it leaves her feeling unsafe, especially on a campus where there has been violence against Jewish students in the past.

"If a mural condoning violence against any other nation was hung on campus, it would rightfully be condemned. Only when it pertains to Jews do we see this disturbing double standard," she said.

The painting won second place in a student art contest a few years ago, and despite Jewish students' complaints to the university administration, it still hangs in the student centre.

This painting hangs in York University's student centre, despite repeated complaints from Jewish students.

Marc Newburgh, CEO of Hillel Ontario, has walked by the painting as well. When he's asked about anti-Semitism on Ontario campuses, he's quick to point out while each school has its own concerns, there are no riots, no fires burning. While there may be anti-Israel protests, hateful graffiti and divisive votes for boycotts, sanctions and divestment (BDS), students can generally go to school and get an education in peace.

"Like any other minority on campus, our students certainly, at times, are confronted with issues of discrimination and confronted by those who are not pleased with our support for Israel," he said in an interview.

"I don't think it's out of control, I don't think it's running rampant. Students feel safe. They're having a good experience."

Shachar disagrees. In an essay published in *The CJN* earlier this year, she described York as "a breeding ground for violence, hate and discrimination against Israel and its student supporters."

For his part, Newburgh said that while he wishes anti-Israel protests weren't part of the campus landscape, he acknowledges that university students are at an age when they express their opinions forcefully and can be attracted to a narrative that paints the Palestinians as the underdogs in the Middle East.

But most Jewish students, and in fact students in general are oblivious, "going to university with their ear buds on," he said.

"Those students that are actively engaged are going to feel it more than the average Jewish student," he added.

While some Canadian campuses seem to be perpetually engaged in BDS campaigns, others have remained more tranquil. Similarly, some students are able to walk past the protests and ignore anti-Israel comments from faculty and student associations, while others feel isolated and deeply frustrated that Jewish groups and university administrations can't reach a consensus on how to best counter what seems like a propaganda machine intent on demonizing Israel.

Nicole West, a fourth-year communications student at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont., and president of the Students Supporting Israel club, said there is little anti-Israel sentiment on her campus.

But she's discouraged that there was also apathy from the Jewish community when students organized a mock checkpoint where they yelled at participants in order to simulate what life is like for Palestinians on the West Bank.

She understands that reacting will only provoke a heated response, but said, "I'm the kind of person who fights fire with fire.

"I think it's important to be proactive and say our narrative before the other side can say theirs. Once they say Jews killed babies, it's very hard to turn back."

Last month she helped organize an event that saw several young Israelis come to campus and speak with students.

The reaction, for the most part, was respectful. The group included a Druze Israeli and a Bedouin who were an effective counterpoint to the "social justice warriors" who protest against Israel, she said.

Not all campuses are so easygoing. A similar event last year at Hamilton's McMaster University saw 75 students stage a "die-in protest." A Palestinian-Israeli participant was so shaken after she was harassed at a tabling session that she withdrew from an evening event.

Fourth-year arts and science student, Hayley Goldfarb, president of McMaster's Hillel, didn't see the protests last year, but said they were instigated by a fringe group of people.

Hillel "tables" regularly in the McMaster student centre, promoting its own events and preferring to deliver a pro-Israel message to the entire university community rather than engage with protesters, she said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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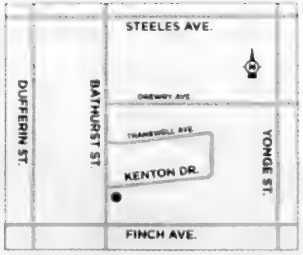

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In these perilous times, words matter

Gil Troy

These are worrying times. We have an American president who refuses to acknowledge the nature of the harshest ideology targeting America since Communism, and resents using the "t" word, terrorism, for blatantly political acts of violence. We have university students – emboldened by cowed professors – imposing their own language, hierarchies, sensibilities, even their own versions of history, on their campuses. We have a perverse international sensibility that demonizes a small, embattled democracy while applauding a nationalist movement that maims and slaughters innocents. And, in response, we have populist demagogues rising to fame, grasping at power, by seeming to "tell it like it is," unlike the stiff, suffocating and politically correct elites.

If you think this is "just" an American or European problem, you're missing the dynamics on many Canadian campuses, and among many Canadian elites, too.

As Jews, these mass idiocies are particularly worrisome. Not only has Israel become the Jew among the nations, targeted viciously. But when populist irrationality festers, when truth suffers, we suffer too. If traditionally the Bible urged us to "speak truth to power," today we must tell truth to those who define themselves as powerless, too.

That's one of the great, perverse inversions of our political moment. The topsy-turvyness has people who claim to be powerless asserting a Stalinist kind of ideological power in the media and on campus, and launching self-righteous violence through terrorism. Those of us who oppose them, who fight for truth, reasonableness and moderation – or at least an acknowledgment of messiness, complexity and contradictions – are often intimidated, demonized or shut down by being labelled "racist."

The civil rights activist Bayard Rustin called it 40 years ago, when Palestinians and Soviets cooked up the Big Red Lie, calling Zionism "racism." Fearing the hijacking of this specific term whose moral power comes from denouncing biologically based bigotry, Rustin, a close friend of Martin Luther King, Jr., warned that racism would became an all-purpose meaningless epithet "in international discussions," like "s.o.b." is "in personal relations."

How right he was. So, today, if you criticize this phenomenon called Islamist radicalism and suggest that slaughtering people in the name of Islamism is terrorism, you risk being called "racist," despite the many Quranic injunctions justifying jihad and the millions of Muslims who embrace this hateful ideology. And, today, if you defend free speech and free thought on university campuses, let alone controversial ideas or even edgy Halloween costumes, you risk being called "racist," despite the pressing needs of minority students for freedom from conformity, and from suffocating, stultifying, established ways of thinking and acting. And, of course, if you dare defend Israel, you risk being called "racist," even though there are dark-skinned Israelis and light-skinned Palestinians, facing off in what is a *national* clash, not a racial or biologically based one.

So, no, neither Canadians, nor anyone else should be saying, "it cannot happen here." Following the Paris massacre, we are all reliving Pastor Martin Niemoller's warnings, that "first they came" for the socialists, the trade unionists, the Jews, and when "they came for me, there was no one left to speak for me." In France, first they came for the Jews, and that was OK, because after all, we're (all!) racist oppressors of the Palestinians. Then they came for the satirists, and that was OK, because as even U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said, there was a reason why Muslims might hate these Islamophobes. Then they came for Friday-night revellers in the City of Light, and even so, my kids in Jerusalem wondered why there was so much anger against those murders but so little outcry about stabbings in our neighbourhoods.

So, yes, ideas count, words matter, truth must prevail – otherwise we will all sink into moral confusion and encourage foolishly rationalized evil. ■

Selling crazy: from Niemöller to Trump to Nicholson

Sara Horowitz

If someone had predicted 10 years ago that a mainstream candidate for the U.S. presidency would have called for an outright ban on members of a religious group, I wouldn't have believed it. In fact, if someone had predicted it 10 minutes before a Republican hopeful released his policy statement on Muslims, I wouldn't have believed it.

If it had been Purim, not Chanukah, it would pass as a Purim spiel, albeit not very clever and more than a bit offensive. But GOP aspirant Donald Trump was serious when he called for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States." More chilling still was the boost in the polls the statement gave him. While many people in the Unites States and abroad, and across the political spectrum, denounced his blanket scapegoating of all Muslims, the bump in the polls is deeply disturbing. Although the presidential primaries are still a way off, I suddenly understood how a power-hungry demagogue with not much to offer but narcissism could play the fear card to put himself in power through democratic processes.

Many Jewish groups joined in condemning Trump, as they should – as we should. I was reminded of the oft-quoted statement of the anti-Nazi Lutheran German pastor, Martin Niemoller, whose politics shifted once he understood the nefarious nature of National Socialist ideology. "First they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out, because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists, and I did not speak out, because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out, because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak out for me."

In fact, Muslims join a growing list of categories of folks that Trump would ban outright from the United States, or whom he dismisses disrespectfully when their views collide with his own, or about whom he promulgates stereotypes. While Jews aren't first on his list of enemies, Niemoller's statement can serve as a caution for where Trump's rhetoric may land if they – if we – don't call him on his bigotry. His crude rhetoric of hate and scorn has taken aim at Mexicans, the disabled, women, veterans, professors, the poor, and many, many others – yes, Jews, as well (although the Anti-Defamation League has officially pronounced his recent remarks about Jews as negotiators and money-wielders to fall short of anti-Semitism).

Disturbingly, Trump isn't the only power broker who plays the politics of fear. The sort of heightened rhetoric and irresponsible pandering to insecurities and prejudices that Trump employs has become increasingly part of the political arsenal of those aspiring to power, or holding on to it in countries that define themselves as democratic, diverse, and ethical. This not only cheapens the civic discourse. It pits people and communities against one another, polarizes them and fans the flame of discord rather than lowering the temperature. In the guise of fighting extremism, such rhetoric fertilizes it and entrenches its roots.

Soon after Trump called for a ban on Muslims until such time as some unnamed Americans "can figure out what is going on," spoofs began to appear on the web. One satire announced that the Canadian government has declared a ban on Americans, sealing its borders with the United States because "it is impossible to vet them, know where they've been or what they really think." Another suggested that since white supremacists have been a source of violence, white people should be banned from America. J. K. Rowling compared the GOP hopeful to Lord Voldemort, Harry Potter's evil nemesis.

Perhaps laughter is the best strategy, pointing out the absurdity of a would-be president. Comedy can be deadly serious. To quote Jack Nicholson's line in the movie *As Good as it Gets*: "Sell crazy someplace else. We're all stocked up here." ■

Jews and Christmas: Enjoy the holiday

Michael Taube

As a longtime newspaper columnist, one of my favourite annual traditions has been to write about Christmas.

I'm an agnostic Jew, but I've celebrated this holiday since I was young. My wife and I purchase a tree each year, and decorate it with ornaments. There's a wreath on the door, and other ones throughout our home. Garland is wrapped around the banister. Holiday music, both traditional and modern, can often be heard. My son excitedly opens up his presents on Christmas Day, although that goes without saying!

This year, I decided to write about Christmas for what could be my most unusual audience: *CJN* readers.

How would I tackle it, exactly? Most of you celebrate Chanukah, and I don't. A few of you might have trees, ornaments and wreaths, but it wouldn't be extensive. Some of the most popular Christmas songs were written by Jews, but that's common knowledge.

So, I thought that I could address Christmas from different angles.

It would be interesting to examine early North American Jews and their positive feelings toward Christmas. As noted in Penne L. Restad's *Christmas in America: A History*, an 1877 issue of the *Philadelphia Times* reported "the Hebrew brethren did not keep aloof" from Christmas, and that young Jewish children "were as happy… as Christian children" with the Christmas trees which "bloomed" in their homes.

Another possibility was to mention that Christmas, aside from its name, has pagan components. While Christmas trees date back to 15th- or 16th-century Germany, it also has a long association as a pagan symbol. It wasn't until the 19th century, in fact, that North Americans accepted this long-honoured European tradition as their own.

My own family could make for a good column. To my parents' credit, they both had tolerant attitudes about Christmas. My father had a little fake Christmas tree (or Chanukah bush, depending on the client) in his office. My mother never wanted to put one up, but she enjoyed looking at my tree and putting up ornaments.

I could also target the astonishing intolerance some Jews have about Christmas. You know, the sanctimonious feelings of supposed "confusion" during this time of year, being "left out" of the holiday mix, believing Christmas is "only" for Christians, or "hating" Jolly Old St. Nick, trees, lights, music, etc.

Then again, some Jews combine elements of Chanukah and Christmas for personal reasons, or because they're in a mixed marriage, or otherwise. I saw a Star of David on a home in place of a wreath last year. There are Jewish ornaments specifically made for Christmas trees, and even full-sized Chanukah bushes/trees.

Hmm. What's the best way to discuss Christmas with people who don't, for the most part, celebrate this holiday?

Oh, wait. I know what to do.

Christmas isn't just for Christians. It never has been, and it never will be. Rather, Christmas is a wonderful, beloved holiday that we can all enjoy in our own way. (For most Jews, it would likely be in a modern, non-religious manner.)

It's important to have the freedom to celebrate any holiday, custom or tradition. Placing restrictions on a person's enjoyment and teaching them that they can't or shouldn't participate in a specific religious/cultural event helps facilitate an environment of ignorance and intolerance. Is this what we really want?

Meanwhile, there are many benefits in exposing people to different religious customs and experiences. Obtuse hang-ups about Christmas would surely fall out of fashion. Religious holidays like Chanukah would become less of a mystery. A bit more tolerance and respect wouldn't kill us, either.

Here's what I would suggest: enjoy Chanukah, and the customs and traditions associated with it. But if your children express interest in singing Christmas carols, trimming a tree, and so forth, let them enjoy these traditions. Who knows? You might even learn to enjoy them, too.

Merry Christmas, everyone! ■

Growing up in the shadow of the refugee experience

Bernie Farber

I've written often on the refugee experience because I was brought up in its shadow. Both my parents left their ancestral homes not because they wanted to, but as a result of persecution and anti-Semitism.

My late mother, Gertrude, was brought to Canada as a child prior to World War II. After her family was driven from their village of Zaslav in Ukraine by violent pogroms, Canada was a welcoming home at that time.

My father, Max, was not so fortunate. He suffered the brutalities of the Shoah. At its tragic conclusion, he had to face the fact he was the sole Jewish survivor of his small Polish shtetl. Murdered in Treblinka were his first wife, two young children (Shalom and Yitzchak), as well as seven brothers and sisters.

Once again, this time following a heartless closed-door immigration policy, Canada re-opened its borders to the stateless people of Europe, including thousands of Jewish survivors like my father.

Through my lived experience as a child of refugees, one thing became clear to me: they all had a story. Their stories ranged from the insignificant to the truly heroic, and from sadness, despair and heartache to joy and elation.

Last month, following almost three years of painstaking research, interviews and conversations, a book on the refugee experience co-written by refugee advocate Ratna Omidvar and Ryerson University researcher Dana Wagner was launched. *Flight and Freedom* tells 30 individual stories of refugees, experiences that were at once complex and harrowing. My father's story is among the 30, and what strikes the reader is both the common experiences and the stark differences that brought them to Canada and helped them start a new life.

All the stories in *Flight and Freedom* are truly compelling. Yet each reader will take certain scenes away that speak to them. The story of Christine, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide is one such story. On its surface, it's as different from my father's Shoah experience as one could imagine.

> *Their stories ranged from the insignificant to the truly heroic*

Geographically, politically, in terms of people and places – little is familiar. Yet, Christine's familiarity with life over death was a theme I sadly understood. As the *génocidaires* were committing mass murder, Christine, then a young child, experienced the slayings of her father and brother. Through the luck of what my father used to call the necessary "1,000 miracles" she and her mother escaped with their lives. Horror surrounds you in such evil times, and understanding how one copes was explained all too well by Christine: "Because you were trying to save your own life, we wouldn't pay attention to what's happening. We would just run."

But perhaps the story that has stayed with me more than others is that of a young Bedouin woman, Sabreen. Brought up in a Bedouin camp in southern Israel, she became a pariah within her tribe because her mother had given birth to her out of wedlock. Within the tightly bound Bedouin community, this was heresy. Her mother was murdered as a result – an honour killing – and Sabreen was suspect from the day she was born.

A forced marriage and its continual physical abuse drove her to attempt suicide. And strangely, it was then that another commonality made itself known. As in my father's story, despair, anger and fear led her to death's door. However, as with my father, death was cheated by happenstance. Her suicide was unsuccessful, and with the help of Israeli friends, Sabreen made it to Tel Aviv and eventually to Canada, where after two attempts, her bid for refugee status was approved.

There is so much more to Sabreen's story, as there are to all the others in *Flight and Freedom*. In the end, each refugee and immigrant in this book share one collective conclusion: each is deeply grateful to Canada for embracing them and giving them back their dignity.

As we welcome Syrian refugees today, it would behoove us all to remember the stories of Sabreen and Christine. ■

News

Islamist allegations surface after MP given key role

PAUL LUNGEN
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Ten years ago, as Omar Alghabra and his supporters celebrated his election victory in Mississauga-Erindale, someone on the noisy stage uttered the phrase, "This is a victory for Islam! Islam won! Islam won!... Islamic power is extending into Canadian politics."

In the chaotic aftermath of his election victory, the boast was heard by some of the people nearby, but not by others.

The incident was reported in a local Mississauga newspaper and picked up abroad by U.S. academic Daniel Pipes, who cautioned about Islamists who support the imposition of sharia law coming close to the levers of power. Relying on reports from Canada, Pipes later ran updates saying it was unclear who actually uttered the Islamic supremacist statement. Alghabra has denied every saying it, and it has been attributed to Khalid Usman, a Liberal party member and Alghabra's supporter.

During the recent election campaign, that incident, along with several others that purported to show Alghabra's support for an Islamist agenda, were promoted in a mass email by Media Action Group, an organization that opposes anti-Semitism. The email referenced a report on the website of Terrorism and Security Experts of Canada (TSEC), which was headlined, "Has the Liberal Party been infiltrated by extremist candidates?" The article referred specifically to Alghabra, who headed the Canadian Arab Federation from 2004 to 2005, and to several others, none of them as prominent as the MP from Mississauga.

Omar Alghabra

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said the TSEC report relies on "guilt by association." He acknowledged, however, "there are multiple points of influence trying to insert themselves into the Liberal party," but he noted that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been "unequivocal in his support for Israel."

University of Toronto political science Prof. Nelson Wiseman called the TSEC report about the purported infiltration of the Liberal party by Islamists replete with innuendo and guilt by association.

"It reminded me of websites that claim that Jews are taking over Canada," he said.

"There's very little evidence of extremism here. There's a lot of innuendo," he added.

A different perspective was offered by David Harris, director of the terrorist intelligence program of INSIGNIS Strategic Research Inc. in Ottawa, and formerly chief of strategic planning at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS).

On the question of Islamic influence and infiltration of the Liberal party, he said, "very senior people in the Liberal party in the past have expressed serious concern on the extent to which certain individuals – Islamist elements, among other interests – may have gained access to the party."

With Alghabra's appointment recently as parliamentary secretary to the minister of foreign affairs for consular affairs, allegations about his agenda have resurfaced. Ezra Levant of *The Rebel*, a right-wing, web-based news and commentary site, and formerly of Sun TV news, questioned what Alghabra's influence could be on the vetting of Syrian refugees, Canada's position on normalizing relations with Iran and on its position on Israel.

Alghabra did not respond to a request for an interview by *The CJN*'s press time.

However, Howard Adelman, a retired York University philosophy professor, reviewed Alghabra's record and concluded not all of the allegations were supported by credible or convincing evidence.

So what exactly is Alghabra accused of?

His critics say he's made several statements over the years that cause concern, such as condemning CanWest newspapers for labelling Hamas and Hezbollah terrorist organizations. In a 2006 interview with B'nai Brith's *Jewish Tribune* newspaper, he declined to condemn suicide bombers; he said he didn't believe Hamas was dedicated to Israel's destruction; and he claimed UN Resolution 242 required Israeli withdrawal from all captured territories, which the clause itself leaves indeterminate, and that he'd criticized Toronto's police chief for taking part in a charity walk for Israel. He also said he mourned the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. And when Ontario declined to permit the use of sharia law in Ontario, Alghabra said he was disappointed.

Recently on *TheRebel.ca*, Levant devoted considerable time to reviewing Alghabra's problematic statements, including one in 2014 in which he posted a critique on Facebook of Israel's "blind and cruel" bombing in Gaza. Alghabra later modified the statement to criticize the killing of all civilians, but not before the Conservative party used that quote in campaign material to contrast it with their position of standing with Israel.

In Adelman's estimation, "the accusations against Omar Alghabra concerning sharia law prove to be even more of a tempest in a teapot without even being able to find any tea leaves."

Adelman did find grounds for concern that the CAF had denounced use of the word terrorist to describe the al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigades. (Years after Alghabra left the CAF, it lost federal funding over its support of terror groups, with a Federal Court judge writing, "All of the [CAF] statements and actions raised by the [then-immigration minister Jason Kenney] can, in my view, reasonably lead one to the view that CAF appears to support organizations that Canada has declared to be terrorist organizations and which are arguably anti-Semitic.")

As for whether Alghabra is a "closet Islamist crusader? I just don't know. He could be an incrementalist on behalf of Islam, secretly moving into a position of political authority. I have no evidence to exonerate him from such a charge. But I have plenty of evidence to insist he be taken as innocent until solid evidence is offered to come to such a conclusion." ■

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Renowned Beth Tzedec choir resigns en masse

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

By all accounts, the Beth Tzedec Singers are a remarkable vocal group. The synagogue itself is effusive in its praise of its in-house choir, calling it "fabulous" and touting its "smooth signature sound [that] makes attendance at our Shabbat and holiday services a unique musical and inspiring experience."

But as of Dec. 12, all that was scheduled to change when the 16-member choir was to deliver its final performance.

According to an email to members from synagogue ritual committee chairs Leonard Cappe and Bill Sklar, the choir announced it is resigning en masse. The move was prompted by a requirement that "members of the choir affirm their Jewish identity by Dec. 31 in order to remain in the choir," Cappe and Sklar write in their email.

"Our wonderful choir consists of both Jews and non-Jews. The inclusion of non-Jews in our choir predates Chazzan [Simon] Spiro. Our choir regards itself as a family tied together by a love of the music of the synagogue. They do not wish to have their family broken up, and as a result, they have decided to leave as a group, effective this coming Shabbat Dec. 12, 2015," the email states.

Cappe and Sklar go on to say the resignation of the choir "will have a significant impact on our Shabbat and Yom Tov services."

But it's the question of whether non-Jews are entitled to daven (pray) on behalf of the congregation on those holy days that is at the heart of the disagreement over the choir's future.

According to a tshuvah (a response to a question of Jewish law) by the shul's senior rabbi, Baruch Frydman-Kohl, it is inappropriate and contrary to precedent for non-Jews to lead certain prayers.

The chazzan (cantor) and by extension, the choir, is the shaliach tzibur (representative of the congregation) in prayer, Rabbi Frydman-Kohl notes. From the first time non-Jews were permitted to join Jewish choirs in Reform congregations in the 19th century, questions were raised "whether the most sacred parts of a service should be sung by people unable to enter into the spirit of the religious community they were meant to represent."

The rabbi added: "Those who serve as choristers should be part of the covenantal community. In the most basic sense, this is the role of a shaliach tzibur and what the prayer leader does."

The Conservative movement adopted that position in 1954, reviewed it and affirmed it several times since, he noted.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

But Walter Soles, who's been with the choir for more than 20 years, said its members "feel it is demeaning" to sign the document being asked of them. "We rejected it, considering we had been there quite some time. It seemed kind of silly."

Soles said the choir's decision to resign was made unanimously last summer after a round of Internet correspondence.

Nevertheless, "We sang the High Holidays... We are connected to the synagogue, and feel an obligation to it," he said.

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl told *The CJN* "the issue has been around for a long time" and was raised in meetings with the synagogue's lay leadership. Three years ago he tried to clarify the shul's position and bring the policy regarding the choir into line with the synagogue's policy on other issues, such as marriage and burial.

The choir was told months ago of the impending change, and an April deadline was extended to December, he said.

He acknowledged, however, that "we were taken aback by the resignations." He had expected the members to affirm their Jewish heritage so that, in future, non-Jewish choir members would simply refrain from participating in prayers that recognize God and affirm faith, such as the *Shema* and *Shmoneh Esrei*, as well as affirm Jewish peoplehood. That would leave many morning psalms that could have the choir's full participation, he said.

Soles, however, was unaware of that possible compromise. In an email to a member of the synagogue's music committee, he stated, "You mean you're willing to turn your back on the group that is there every Shabbat, rain, snow or shine; a group that brings you such prominence; a group whose only wishes are to help make your prayers and presence more beautiful and meaningful? Honestly, I wish I could understand. I can't... help me."

Interestingly, neither Rabbi Frydman-Kohl nor Soles knew how many non-Jews were in the choir, and the rabbi said Cantor Spiro will have to recruit a new group. ■

Protest disrupts York U Chanukah celebration

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A pre-Chanukah fun get-together sponsored by Hillel at York University was disrupted recently by supporters of Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) who were attending a "silent protest" nearby.

As students gathered at a Chanukah photo booth in Vari Link on Dec. 3, protesters attending a YU Divest event tens of metres away approached the Hillel display and chanted slogans. At one point, before the Hillel event formally kicked off, they were seen handing out leaflets only a couple of metres from the Hillel display. YU Divest is a campaign launched by SAIA in 2011.

"We had students come up to us expressing their frustration that a protest was happening and that it created a negative atmosphere for the students," said Anna Baev, director of Hillel York and Jewski, an outreach program to Russian Jews. "They felt it was ruining the overall environment on campus."

The pre-Chanukah event featured a photo booth and various Chanukah-related props, including an inflatable chanukiyah. Students took fun pictures in the booth and asked Hillel student leaders and shinshinim – visiting Israeli emissaries – about the holiday. About 400 students participated at the Hillel event over two days, many of them not Jewish, Baev said.

On its Facebook page, Hillel stated, "What was planned as a silent protest turned into chants and the blocking of the hallways. While Hillel prides itself on promoting respectful discourse on all campuses, we find tactics of harassment and intimidation to be intolerable."

Hillel later added: "We would like to clarify that the demonstrators were not protesting the photo booth itself. The protest was an unrelated event that took place nearby."

Joanne Rider, director of media relations at York, said "we are in the process of reviewing video footage and soliciting feedback from staff members who were present."

"YU Divest, a group with members from various clubs and organizations, held a silent protest in Vari Hall on that day. The table booked by Hillel was located in the Ross Link. Hillel members were advised in advance by York staff that YU Divest was tabling in the adjacent space and they agreed to be in the link which is a distance from Vari Hall," Rider said.

(Baev told *The CJN* that York's administration confirmed the booking of the Chanukah event Nov. 23, but were only told of the nearby protest on the morning of Dec. 3.)

"Janet Morrison, vice-provost students, has personally reached out to students who have expressed concerns. We have not received a formal complaint from a student, nor have we been contacted by any students who said they were present and felt intimidated," Rider said.

York students with an inflatable chanukiyah

"Any student who has or does contact us will be advised about how – under the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities – they can file a formal complaint. We encourage them to do so.

"York University is committed to freedom of expression and takes proactive measures to help ensure a safe and inclusive environment free from discrimination and harassment," she added.

The Chanukah get-together was part of Hillel's mandate of creating a visible presence, presenting Jewish programming and enhancing Jewish life on campus. Despite the disruption, "we consider our event a success," Baev said.

On Dec. 7, after the start of the holiday, another 60 students – Jewish and non-Jewish – participated in a candle-lighting ceremony and continued the celebration at Hillel's campus headquarters. The event included a food drive to benefit Jewish and non-Jewish food banks, Baev said.

Commenting on the photo booth incident, Avi Benlolo, CEO of Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, said, "The true anti-Semitic nature of the anti-Israel boycott crowd at York University was on full display as a Jewish student celebration of Chanukah was disrupted by anti-Israel students chanting and blocking hallways... This incident may be the beginning a more profound effort to marginalize the Jewish presence at York as anti-Israel incitement on campus, encouraged by a large mural at York's student centre which promotes Palestinian violence against Israel, does not typically cross over into direct anti-Jewish action, as it now has done."

SAIA representatives did not reply to requests for comment by *The CJN*'s deadline. ■

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GUEST VOICE

Why I had to be at Sarah Litman's wedding

Rabbi Mark Fishman

Last month, a father and his son were taking a drive together outside their home in the city of Hebron when terrorists opened fire on their car. The father, Rabbi Ya'akov Litman, and his 18-year-old son, Netanel, were both murdered. The fact that their daughter and sister, Sarah, was scheduled to be married just days later made this tragedy all the more poignant.

In the face of such loss, the family, including Sarah Litman and her fiancé, Ariel Beigel, decided to postpone the wedding by one week in order to sit shivah. When she was interviewed in Israel, Sarah said, "Very soon, we will marry in a large and happy wedding. We will go on and be happy as father and Netanel always were. We will not be crushed."

When I heard this courageous and incredible display of strength, I was touched to my core. I felt that Sarah represented much more than just one person. She came to symbolize the spirit of the entire Jewish People. Her words emphasized that we will not be defined by tragedy, and we will not stop living our lives even in the face of darkness. I knew then that I had to go to Israel and dance at this wedding, and with just two days notice, 12 leaders of my congregation decided to join me.

We entered the wedding hall together with 20,000 other people – Jews from every walk of life, from every corner of Israel and beyond, from every religious stripe. We were secular and religious. Some wore their army uniforms, while others wore uniforms of a different sort, including the traditional ultra-Orthodox garb of *bekishes* and shtreimls. The message was clear: Am Yisrael had gathered together to find peoplehood.

In the middle of the craziness, through circles of circles of dancing men, I somehow found myself propelled to the very epicentre of the joy, where the chattan, with his beaming smile and larger than life joy, was.

I told him we had come all the way from Canada to be with him and to dance at his wedding. He took hold of my shoulders and for a moment that felt like an eternity, he looked at me with disbelief. Then he said, "Wow! Thank you so much for coming here and for being with us!"

> *We came from Montreal looking for brotherhood, and brotherhood is what we found.*

I just burst open with awe and pride.

To go from the fresh grave of a father and brother to invite the entire nation to your wedding, and for that entire nation to respond with an incredible "Yes," despite the pain – or, perhaps because of the pain, the need to harness, uplift and sanctify the pain – all the dire strivings of our people were encapsulated right in that single gesture, a wedding in defiance of a funeral.

We came from Montreal looking for brotherhood, and brotherhood is what we found. I silently prayed: "Ribbono Shel Olam, Master of the World – this is your chattan, this is your kallah, these are your sons, these are your daughters. And if for just that one moment we could truly see all that was important, then *dayeinu* – it was enough."

For 2,000 years, we sat shivah, outside our land, aware of what we have lost. And yet we have continued. We keep getting married, keep having children, keep celebrating, notwithstanding the tears we may still have on our cheeks. Our people never give up on life itself. ■

Rabbi Mark Fishman is spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Tikvah in Montreal.

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Canadian Jews criticize Trump for Muslim comments

PAUL LUNGEN
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Donald Trump's ability to elicit reaction with controversial comments reached north of the border into Canada where Prime Minister Justin Trudeau joined a chorus of condemnation for the Republican presidential candidate's call to restrict Muslim entry to the United States.

"Canadians are very aware of my feelings on this," Trudeau said, while not referring specifically to Trump by name. "And they, by the way, sided pretty clearly against the politics of fear and division in our election here."

Jewish organizations in Canada joined in condemning Trump.

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) stated, "While CIJA does not ordinarily comment on internal American politics, Donald Trump's call for a blanket ban on Muslims entering the United States is appalling. Blacklists and bigotry are not only offensive, they obstruct meaningful debate around public policy solutions to the serious challenge of Islamist terrorism. Such reckless statements risk undermining the efforts of governments, security services and Muslim moderates who are working to counter extremism.

"When political leaders stake out such positions, they provide legitimacy to extreme rhetoric usually confined to the margins of political discourse," Fogel said.

Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center opposes "the racism inherent in Donald Trump's proposal to ban Muslim immigration to the United States," the organization's CEO, Avi Benlolo, said.

"Mr. Trump, by lumping all Muslims in the cross-hairs of the terrorism crisis, only hurts the legitimate campaign against Islamist fundamentalism and demeans law-abiding American citizens," he said.

In a statement, Shahid Akhtar and Barbara Landau, co-chairs, Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims, also condemned Trump's "hate speech" and called for him to be banned from entering this country and "that corporations rename buildings bearing his name."

They added: "In our lifetime, Jews, blacks, First Nations people, Japanese and others have been the focus of such racism. When people of goodwill fail to raise their collective voices, history teaches us that this silence can be devastating. If we ignore this outrage we will do so at the expense of our children and grandchildren, who will ask why we stayed silent."

Trump drew the ire of public figures around the world when he called "for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on."

That statement came soon after a husband and wife terror team killed 14 people at a Christmas party in San Bernardino, Calif. It prompted bipartisan condemnations from both Republicans and Democrats, as well as from around the world.

U.S. Jewish organizations joined in criticizing "The Donald." Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt called Trump's remarks "unacceptable and antithetical to American values."

"In the Jewish community, we know all too well what can happen when a particular religious group is singled out for stereotyping and scapegoating," Greenblatt wrote in a statement.

Donald Trump
MICHAEL VADON/WIKICOMMONS PHOTO

The American Jewish Committee (AJC) condemned "in the strongest terms" Trump's "latest offensive and inflammatory comments," while two modern Orthodox groups, the Orthodox Union and the Rabbinical Council of America, issued a joint statement saying they "reject calls to limit immigration to the United States based on religion."

Trump, who made billions in real estate, has close ties to the American Jewish community. His daughter, Ivanka, converted to Judaism and observes the Sabbath. Her two children are being raised Jewish.

Last summer, the *Forward* ran an article outlining his Jewish ties. The paper noted he has served as a grand marshal at New York's annual Salute to Israel Parade. After Hurricane Katrina, he was among a group of celebrities who decorated Jewish federation tzedakah boxes to be auctioned off to support hurricane disaster relief, and he was honoured with an award at the annual gala for the *Algemeiner*, a right-wing Jewish news organization.

On Israel, Trump was quoted as saying, "We love Israel. We will fight for Israel 100 per cent, 1,000 per cent. It will be there forever." Trump, however, cancelled plans to visit Israel this month, after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu criticized his call to ban Muslims from entering the United States.

"I have decided to postpone my trip to Israel and to schedule my meeting with Netanyahu at a later date after I become president of the United States," he said the morning of Dec. 10 on Twitter.

Earlier, 37 Israeli MKs, almost all from opposition parties, signed a petition calling on Netanyahu to cancel the Dec. 28 meeting with Trump. Meretz MK Michal Rozin, who initiated the petition, said to hold the meeting would lend support to Trump's comments, disgrace the democratic character of the State of Israel and hurts its Muslim citizens.

Trump was criticized only a few weeks ago after an address to the Republican Jewish Coalition, in which he suggested his audience was preoccupied with money and were good negotiators. He said Israel was partly to blame for the failure to come to terms with the Palestinians.

He has also been criticized for mocking the disabled, accusing immigrants of being killers and rapists, advocating a database to track Muslims in America and making fun of women's looks.

Meanwhile, an online survey by Bloomberg Politics/Purple Strategies PulsePoll, found 37 per cent of likely voters supported Trump's position on Muslim immigration, while a YouGov poll in Britain found 25 per cent support. ■

With files from JTA

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Thornhill residents reject revised Muslim housing plan

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Thornhill Woods residents who have been fighting an Islamic organization's plan to build a community housing complex for Muslims in the predominantly Jewish suburb say the latest revision to the proposal still isn't good enough.

In 2013, the Islamic Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat of Toronto (ISIJ) applied to build a new Islamic development built around the Jaffari Community Centre that included two 17-storey residential towers, 61 townhouses and retail space on its 11- hectare property at 9000 Bathurst St., south of Rutherford Road.

A residents' group set up to oppose the proposed development, Preserve Thornhill Woods Association, led by Rom Koubi, has been working to prevent the City of Vaughan planning department from approving it ever since, claiming the project contravenes density guidelines and is intended for Muslims only.

The city rejected the original plan based on zoning bylaws and the impact that more than 1,400 new residents would have on the suburb's infrastructure, traffic and parking, as well as local schools that are already at capacity.

A working group was established in 2014 to help the ISIJ revise its proposal, since the city's official plan designates the area for low-rise development.

Shabbir Jaffer, vice-president of ISIJ Toronto, and Shafiq Punjani, the housing project's chair, said they're "cautiously optimistic" the latest revision, submitted in late October, will appease residents' and city officials' concerns.

"We tried to adhere in good faith to the principles of the process that were established. Now we put our full confidence in the city council and its staff to consider the proposal objectively before they arrive at their decision," Jaffer said.

Punjani said the plan is to reduce the height of the two buildings from 17 stories each to six and eight stories, respectively. He said the ISIJ has also addressed traffic concerns by proposing a public road going through the development.

"We've also agreed in principle to have the parking facility that we are going to be constructing be accessible to other neighbours, including the [Toronto] Waldorf School, with whom we already share a parking agreement."

But Koubi said despite the fact the high-rise buildings have been replaced with shorter, wider buildings, the same density problems still apply.

Jaffari Community Centre

"It doesn't conform with the rest of the neighbourhood when it comes to look and feel of the neighbourhood... We're talking about 60 townhomes in an area on a street that has 17 houses on it. Everything is really dense," Koubi said.

He added that he also opposes the plan to make it a segregated development for Muslims.

According to the planning justification report submitted to the city, "the proposed development is considered a cultural campus, because it is envisioned to meet the unique needs and serve the members of the Islamic Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat of Toronto."

Punjani countered that "this development will be an inclusive development, and it will be open to all members of the public, although it is being designed with our community needs in mind. So the seniors centre that is being proposed would cater to their dietary needs, like halal meat... but having said that, it would be open to anyone who wanted to reside in the facility."

Koubi said that when he challenged that claim at a public hearing, asking the developers how many of the units would be reserved for the broader public, "They said, 'It is going to be offered first to our people, and whatever is left over will be sold to other people and we expect eight to 10 per cent to be available to the wider community.'"

Koubi added that the ISIJ agreed to allow members of the broader community to use its facilities, which include a soccer field and a tennis court, "but they allowed one hour a week to be open to the public."

His group will hold a community-wide meeting next month to review the new application. The City of Vaughan is expected to hold a public hearing about it in early February. ■

New OISE project aims to counter academic anti-Zionism

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An anti-Zionist bias has "expunged" the study of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust from curricula at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and it's time to reinstate them, says human rights consultant Karen Mock.

A desire to change a campus climate that equates Zionism with oppression has inspired the "The Antisemitism and Holocaust Studies Project: Enhancing Social Justice, Antiracist and Anti-Oppression Education," a new venture initiated by Mock, a human rights consultant, former executive director of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and former national director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, and Bonnie Burstow, an associate professor in adult education at OISE who will act as the project's faculty chair.

The project was officially launched Dec. 8 at OISE at an event that drew about 50 people from the spheres of academia and activism.

However, while the organizing team invited faculty from OISE's social justice education departments, Mock said none of them came. Nevertheless, she said the event was

Karen Mock

successful and will help to create a network of people who will work on this, including from within the local school boards and teachers' federations.

With a stated mandate to reintroduce what Mock and Burstow say is the "reality of anti-Semitism or anti-Jewish oppression as a critical dimension of social justice education," the project, which Mock stressed will evolve over time, will entail a library and online collection of scholarly and practical resources related to Holocaust studies and anti-Semitism – including curriculum materials and teacher education resources – and educational events on anti-Semitism and related topics.

The latter will include an annual lecture on anti-Semitism as a prototype of racism and discrimination, presentations, consciousness-raising workshops and conferences.

Mock told *The CJN* that during the 1980s and '90s, academic journals about social justice education that were published at OISE typically included articles about anti-Semitism, or about how teaching books such as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, could help students understand the dangers of totalitarian thinking.

However, she said, the erasure of such teachings in OISE departments that deal with "so-called equity and social justice" has come about as a result of an "anti-Zionist bias" on campus, manifested in the increased popularity of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, Israeli Apartheid Week and what Mock referred to as "new anti-Semitism in the form of anti-Israel rhetoric."

"There are faculty who identify people like us as Zionists and [say we] are therefore not credible in the anti-oppression world, so this is what we're doing to try to counter that," Mock said.

She added: "There are those who express ideas like, 'Holocaust education is just a tool used by Zionists to cover up the atrocities committed by Israel against the Palestinians' – That's the kind of language that's used [on campus]."

Determined to get their message across in a way that is proactive and rooted in strong academic principles, Mock and her co-organizers created a program focused on what they say is missing in the scholarly landscape and that uses academic teachings to show that underlying the Holocaust was the racialization and demonization of the Jewish people.

Further, the project aims to show that the Holocaust and Holocaust denial are key to understanding modern anti-Semitism, as is the idea that studying anti-Semitism is no longer relevant.

According to the project's official media release, it "will be doing this in a way that is counterhegemonic and which indeed pays careful attention to systemic oppression and the relationship between oppressions."

Organizers will be working with like-minded organizations and individuals and stressed they welcome activists and scholars – Jewish and not – to join them in developing the project. ■

Cyber crime a threat, Israeli-inspired conference told

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Cyber security topped the agenda for a number of presenters at Toronto's first Cybertech Canada conference, held Dec. 9 to link both local and Israeli leaders in business, technology and the start-up world with investors and venture capitalists.

Adapted from Israel's annual Cybertech conference, which lets prospective investors learn about innovations and solutions in the field, the Toronto event was held at the MaRs Discovery District building downtown, a hub that brings together educators, researchers, social scientists and entrepreneurs.

Cybertech Canada was organized by Israeli security magazine *Israel Defense* and sponsors included the City of Toronto, the province of Ontario and the Toronto Financial Services Alliance. The event featured talks and panels delivered by Israeli and Canadian experts on cyber tech from business, the military, government and academia. More than 100 people attended.

Conference chair Yossi Vardi, an Israeli investor and entrepreneur, said the conference grew out of the close relationship between Israel and Canada, as well as between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper.

From left, Yaron Varona of IOTA Security, Tomer Magid of Firelayers and Rami Efrati, of Firmitas discuss cyber start-ups.

"Canada's a country with substantial industries and financial institutions, so there's political significance to doing this but mainly there's business significance... From our perspective, Canada has many large financial institutions... From Canada's point of view, we know there's a lot of curiosity about the whole start-up phenomenon in Israel."

Presenters stressed that the current landscape is increasingly vulnerable to threats posed by hacking and security breaches, and that greater risk awareness is needed.

Kellman Meghu, head of Americas security architects for Check Point Software Technologies, an Israeli company that provides hardware and software products for IT security, spoke about the prevalence of hacking crimes and the advancement of hackers' methods, from credit card theft to larger-scale systems disruptions.

As technological systems become more integrated, hacks to things such as the health care system, airplane control systems or heating and power systems could have grave consequences, Meghu warned.

Robert Gordon, director of Global Cyber Security at CGI, an IT and business process service firm, said greater interconnectivity of devices has created newer, more globalized ways of doing business as well as increased vulnerability.

"People used to access their bank accounts a couple times a week, and now they do it multiple times per day from a variety of digital media.... At the same time, organized crime has moved online and has greater tech capabilities," Gordon said, posing the question, "Can security [developments] match the speed of innovation?"

Rami Efrati, founder and president of information security company Firmitas and former head of the civilian division of the Israel National Cyber Bureau in the Prime Minister's Officer, discussed cyber security for critical infrastructure, saying, "We're going to suffer more and more cyber attacks."

He said Israel and Canada must work together and invest in protection. "We're ready to share our knowledge with you [in Canada]... We're looking for local partners who know the landscape here and can adapt our solutions to their systems," he added.

Former provincial Tory cabinet minister Janet Ecker, now president and CEO of the Toronto Financial Services Alliance, a public-private partnership dedicated to growing the GTA's financial services cluster, stressed that breaches of cyber security is a topic "any CEO in the financial service world is rightly consumed by."

She warned that the growing prevalence of financial technology – "fintech" – firms and the use of mobile devices for financial services increase cyber security threats to the financial sector.

"We're seeing cities who've identified this as a priority, like London, New York and San Francisco, who are viewed as fintech hubs... If we don't push for this [in Toronto], there's a greater risk of slowing down in both sectors. If we get it right, [these partnerships] can be a dynamic source of new growth and future jobs," she said. ■

Pursuing justice 'guided my work,' Cotler tells Aish event

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As keynote speaker at Aish Toronto's gala dinner last week, Irwin Cotler – professor of law, former minister of justice and attorney general of Canada, and the Law Society of Upper Canada's first-ever Human Rights Award winner – said his Jewish values are what "underpinned not only my life's work as a lawyer, but underpinned my life itself.

"It was my father who taught me, when I was too young to understand the profundity of his words – he said to me, '*Tzedek, tzedek tirdof,*' Justice, justice shall you pursue – which was equal to all the other commandments combined," Cotler said at the fundraiser, which attracted about 500 people to Vaughan's Terrace Banquet Hall in support of Aish Toronto programs, including the Jewish Legal Network, a campus-based initiative that provides support to law students who aim to balance career, family and community life.

Cotler said that throughout his career, he immersed himself in two of the greatest human rights struggles of the second half of the 20th century – Soviet Jewry and the fight against South African apartheid.

"I had my parents' teachings in mind when I said I would be guided in my work by one overarching principal... justice, justice shall you pursue, and within that, the promotion and protection of equality as an organizing principle, the building of a just society, and the promotion and protection of human dignity."

From left, lawyers Aaron Blumenfeld, Donald Carr, Darrell Gold, panel discussion moderator Ronald Appleby, Elena Hoffstein, Berl Nadler, and Jordana Stockhamer. DEAN MACDONELL PHOTO

Throughout his 30-minute talk, Cotler outlined a number of Jewish principles that promote human rights and guided him throughout his career, including freedom of speech, the value of which he learned from working with former political prisoners, such as Jewish Agency chair Natan Sharansky and the late South African president Nelson Mandela.

But he was also well aware of the dangers of evil speech, or *lashon hara.*

"The Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers. It began with words," he said. "We sometimes forget... that the 21st century began... with the supreme leader of Iran saying that there can be no solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict without the annihilation of the Jewish state."

He said the current Syrian refugee crisis is the "worst humanitarian tragedy since the end of the Second World War in terms of refugees. The epicentre of this tragedy is Syria, where... more than 300,000 people have been killed, 12.5 million of Syrian citizens have been forcibly displaced, close to five million have become refugees."

But, he added, it's important to differentiate between the consequence and the cause of a humanitarian catastrophe such as this one.

"The cause is the criminality today, cause by [Syrian President Bashar] Assad and joined as well now by ISIS and other radical jihadists," he said. "If we don't address the cause, we will continue to suffer and endure the consequences."

Before Cotler spoke, six lawyers who were being honoured for their commitment to justice and community work – Aaron Blumenfeld, Donald Carr, Darrell Gold, Elena Hoffstein, Berl Nadler, and Jordana Stockhamer – took part in a panel discussion offering advice to young lawyers.

Carr, who has been practising law since the 1950s, spoke about his beginnings as a Jewish community "foot soldier" volunteering for UJA of Greater Toronto. He's gone on to volunteer for a number of Jewish organizations, including the United Jewish Welfare Fund, and serves as the *CJN*'s chairman emeritus after more than 20 years as the *CJN*'s president.

"What led me to this, as I've said before, I think there is such a connection between the law and community that is almost, not just an easy step, but virtually part of the practise of law," Carr said.

"You're part of the community and the community operates because of the law." ■

Outremont adopt restrictions on houses of worship

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Members of the chassidic community are vowing to go to court after Outremont adopted a controversial rezoning bylaw Dec. 7 banning new houses of worship on and around Laurier and Bernard avenues.

After a 2-½-hour discussion with a capacity audience of about 60, the borough council voted 4-1 in favour of amendments affecting its busiest commercial arteries.

In a repeat of the result at the proposed modifications' first reading on Nov. 16, Mindy Pollak, who is chassidic, was the only councillor voting against it.

As is common is controversial zoning matters, a public register is expected to be opened, and if a still-to-be-determined sufficient number of citizens sign it, the issue will likely go to a referendum.

The council went ahead despite receiving a lawyer's letter on Dec. 4 demanding that the vote be postponed.

Jacob Karmel and Alex Werzberger, with the support of a large number of members of the chassidic community, have retained prominent civil rights lawyer Julius Grey to fight the rezoning.

They feel the changes target their community, which largely lives in proximity to the affected zones and had recently applied to open another synagogue in the area.

They also object to the designation of a zone in the northeast corner of the borough for any future houses of worship.

Grey objects that the modifications do not take into account the needs of the chassidic community, which is growing at a faster rate than the rest of the population.

"It is clear that the regulation targets them directly, not with the goal of satisfying their needs, but with the goal of bullying them," the letter states. "Furthermore, Outremont has an unfortunate history of strained relations with this community."

Grey notes that the designated zone for houses of worship is a 20- to 30-minute walk from where most of the community lives.

Adopting the bylaw would be an act of "bad faith," as a majority spoke against it at a public consultation on Dec. 1.

The letter demands that the borough suspend going ahead and conduct both a demographic study and a study of its citizens' needs, particularly the religious communities.

The council said it is rezoning in an effort to "revitalize" its commercial districts based on a report of the urban planning department.

Borough Mayor Marie Cinq-Mars said several other Montreal boroughs have adopted similar regulations restricting houses of worship in commercial districts.

On the day of the vote, Outremont council, as well as Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre, also received a letter signed by 25 people, mainly non-chassidic and living in Outremont and elsewhere, who expressed their "grave concern" over the rezoning.

Mayer Feig, right, and Rafael Brecher speak to the media at a public consultation on Dec. 1.
JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

Among the signatories are McGill University law professors Shauna Van Praagh and Tina Piper, lawyers Yves Corriveau and Martha Shea, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières professor Sylvie Taschereau, as well as rabbis Ascher Grunfeld and Levi Roth of, respectively, the Vizhnitz and Belz communities.

They say the borough should have collected "objective and measurable data" to support the need for these changes, and not one complaint about houses of worship in their midst was recorded from a merchant in the affected zones.

"No public administration in a 21st-century democracy should have proceeded blindly ahead, fostering divisions and tensions with baseless assertions about the impact of communities of faith," they write.

Confining all religious establishments to one small area will cause logistical problems, such as traffic congestion, as well as detract from "human dignity."

"Corralling all people of faith into one area based on evidence-free decision-making contravenes the spirit of the Canadian and Quebec Charters of Rights and Freedoms, the Montreal Declaration on Living Together [signed this past June] and the commitments made by our city as part of our membership in the Canadian and International Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination," the letter reads.

The signatories say Outremont could learn from the neighbouring Plateau Mont-Royal borough, where businesses are now thriving beside places of worship on the previously derelict area around Park and Bernard avenues.

Meanwhile, Luc Ferrandez, leader of the opposition Projet Montréal, also spoke out against Outremont's move, saying it is causing anger and resentment. He urges an immediate city-wide public consultation on how best to integrate new houses of worship in a spirit of tolerance.

That approach is being endorsed by CRARR (Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations), a non-profit organization that fights discrimination. It's critical of Outremont's plan, saying it has caused "social tensions," infringes on rights, and is vague in its definition of "*lieux de culte*" (places of worship) and "*activités religieuses*" (religious activities). ■

Korczak set standard for children's rights, book launch told

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The extent to which Polish Jewish pediatrician, educator and orphanage director Janusz Korczak, often called "the father of children's rights," was ahead of his time was emphasized repeatedly at a book launch at Queen's Park last week.

Organized by the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth and UNICEF Canada, the Dec. 10 event helped mark the release of Israeli author Lea Lipiner's book *My Life as a Child of Janusz Korczak, the Father of Children's Rights: The Biography of Shlomo Nadel*, which tells the story of Nadel's experiences growing up between the two world wars in an orphanage in Warsaw founded and run by Korczak.

Korczak was the pen name of Henryk Goldszmit, who founded the first progressive orphanages in Poland to shelter Jewish and Catholic children. After turning down offers of sanctuary from the Polish resistance, he chose to die with the Jewish orphans in his care at Treblinka in 1942.

Lea Lipiner signs books at the launch.

Nadel's father died when he was four and his mother was unable to care for him, so he came to Korczak's orphanage in 1927 at age 7 and stayed until 1935, aged 16. He left Warsaw in 1939 due to rising hostilities there and moved from place to place, finally landing in Uzbekistan. He eventually found his way to Israel, where he lives today. His mother died in the Holocaust.

Korczak's philosophy about respecting children as fully formed human beings and giving them the same rights as adults – concepts we take for granted today – is widely considered to have inspired the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), ratified by the UN General Assembly in 1989. The launch was timed to honour Human Rights Day.

The event drew about 100 people and included speakers, a book signing by Lipiner and an exhibit of black-and-white photographs from Korczak's orphanage.

Irwin Elman, provincial advocate for children and youth, emphasized the importance of the rights of children and youth in care not being treated as a partisan issue, but one that unites all three parties – a point reflected in the attendance of MPPs from all three parties in the legislature.

"I'm often told, 'You can't legislate love,' but my response is that we *can* legislate policies that create conditions in which love can flourish. This book is full of examples of that, like Korczak making sure [the deprivation] of food was never used as a punishment against the orphans, or the importance of providing children with mentors," Elman said, stressing that lessons learned from Korczak about creating physically, emotionally and spiritually safe, nourishing and respectful environments for children should be applied to the ways Ontario treats children in state care.

MPP Sylvia Jones, Conservative critic for children and youth services, said reading Lipiner's book showed her "how far we still have to go" to ensure that children and youth in care are protected, while her NDP counterpart, MPP Monique Taylor, said the book "is a powerful read and an example of how we should be treating our children."

Grzegorz Morawski, consul general of Poland in Toronto, underscored the universality of Korczak's message in a world where global conflicts create many orphans each year. He said Korczak's famous quote, "There are no children; there are people," is an important standard by which all children should be treated. ■

BDS votes generate tensions, even when they don't pass

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

"They have tables, we have tables to offer another side of the story," she said.

Goldfarb said she has never been harassed for expressing her pro-Israel beliefs. "I'm always wearing a Star of David," she said pointing to her necklace. "We're all very comfortable here."

Last year's protest at McMaster came weeks before the students' union voted to endorse a BDS motion, which also heightened tensions on campus.

BDS votes, even if they don't pass, can generate a hostile environment, said Leonard Saxe, a professor of contemporary Jewish studies at Brandeis University and co-author of a report entitled *Anti-Semitism and the College Campus: Perceptions and Realities*, released earlier this year.

Hillel and other Jewish advocacy groups are quick to point out that BDS votes are largely symbolic, and university administrators continue to forge close ties with their colleagues in Israel. But there is no doubt, Saxe said, that the campaigns themselves generate tension.

"Across the board, the BDS movement has gained steam, and in some ways, it's a more serious situation than it was five years ago," Saxe said in an interview.

In British Columbia, Rabbi Phillip Bregman, executive director of Hillel BC said a contentious BDS vote at the University of British Columbia last year, which was defeated, led to "a storm of anti-Semitic events.

"Relatively speaking, things are quiet," on the seven campuses where BC Hillel works. "If you're smart, you're probably just holding your breath until things are not quiet," he said.

Hayley Goldfarb

Saxe surveyed 3,000 North American Jewish students, including 400 Canadians, and singled out Canadian and California universities as schools with the highest levels of hostility toward Israel. The respondents were students who had applied to go on a Birthright trip and are representative of the average Jewish student on campus, he said.

The survey found that one-third of students reported being verbally harassed because they are Jewish, but on some campuses, this can be as high as 40 or 45 per cent, Saxe said.

Perception of anti-Semitism tends to go "hand in hand with high levels of identification," but it's unclear if these students are an easy target or perceive it more intensely, he said.

Nonetheless, on some campuses, anti-Semitic incidents create "a hostile environment for Jewish students who support Israel's right to exist."

And the survey illustrates that the effects are widespread. "It's not just a small group of the most engaged people who are subjected to this," Saxe said.

Students who are pro-Israel, in fact, face a dilemma when they find themselves unexpectedly thrust into a hostile environment, but have no desire to become embroiled in debate or politics.

Emma Corber, a second-year theatre student at Montreal's Concordia University said, "I'm not here to be an advocate for Israel. I don't want to be a human sacrifice," but she said she was left feeling isolated and powerless after her first semester of school, when an active BDS campaign was underway.

"It was the opposite of a welcome wagon for me. Everywhere I'd go, there was some sort of petitioning going on. I felt really isolated," she said.

"There were posters everywhere. A lot of them would say 'Come to this panel where we're going to uncover Israeli war crimes.' That's really hurtful to see."

The worst was seeing the student newspaper publish a series of articles about Israel and the BDS vote that were "blatant propaganda.

"I saw the newspaper everywhere, and it crushed me."

She says she met with a university dean who empathized with her, but said he was also powerless to intervene.

Corber turned to Hillel as a refuge and a place to meet Jewish friends who understood her feelings, but she is leery of the pro-Israel advocacy she has seen on campus.

"They put out arguments that are one-sided the other way. It's not conducive to positive political discourse and problem-solving," she says. "I'd rather not be a part of any group that's going to add to the flames."

But sometimes, on a volatile campus, the flames are fanned inadvertently.

An anti-Israel protest last month at York that Hillel students were observing escalated and led to campus security being called, said Hillel student president Natalie Slavat, who is in her final year studying psychology.

"A lot of [first-year] students were shocked," she said. "Now they understand the reality."

In response to the protest, Hillel led a prayer for Jewish unity and world peace to offer a more constructive response, Slavat said.

Being an active Zionist on campus can be challenging, especially when the student government has repeatedly pushed a BDS agenda.

"It can feel very uncomfortable to approach them with other issues. It can feel very isolating," to the Jewish student community, she said.

Slavat recently spoke with students at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto as part of a workshop on life after high school.

"When you grow up in Jewish day school, the experience of coming to campus can be nerve-wracking," she said.

But her message to students was unequivocal. "As much as it's tough, it's very, very rewarding. I'm very passionate about the opportunity to stand up for the Jewish People and Israel on campus," she said in an interview. "I feel very lucky to do the work that I do."

The reality is that on many campuses, students wish that Slavat and her activist peers did not have any work to do at all. ■

Applications down for prestigious Israeli fellowship

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The Bronfman Youth Fellowships are still looking for a few good teens.

The prestigious Israel study program for students entering Grade 12 usually attracts 300 applicants each year for 26 spots, but worries about security have led only 150 students to apply so far, organizers say. The deadline to submit an application is Jan. 6.

Highly publicized attacks in Israel and the U.S. State department's caution on worldwide travel issued last month are likely responsible for the shortfall, said New York-based Becky Voorwinde, co-director of the program.

"For people who are watching the news, there's added fear," she said.

The highly selective program offers a five-week trip to Israel, where students travel and meet with leading Israeli thinkers, artists and educators. Students also participate in two educational seminars in New York and undertake a social action project.

The program is also unique, in that nearly all costs are paid, with families responsible for a $600 fee and airfare to New York for the two educational seminars. Financial aid is available to cover those expenses for families if necessary, Voorwinde said.

The program attracts a diverse group of high school students. About two or three Canadians are among the 26 fellows selected annually, she said.

Although the program is now in its 30th year, the challenge is still getting the word out, especially to students who are less connected to the Jewish community, she said.

Applications from students in Jewish high schools, across denominations, have remained stable, she added."We're not

> *For people who are watching the news, there's added fear.*

panicked that we won't have a strong cohort, but we really want to reach the widest pool of candidates possible." After a recent conference call with 40 families, more applications were completed, she said.

The program has not changed its security protocols, but in the last year, there has been a greater attempt to inform parents about how decisions are made about where to tour in Israel, she said.

Enrolment is also down slightly at the Conservative movement's high school semester in Jerusalem program, which starts next month, said Judy Greene, registrar for Ramah's Israel programs.

"We have 36 students. We usually have 50, but we're still receiving applications," she said, adding that most parents are very supportive of their children going to Israel, and sometimes it's the students who feel they should go to Israel another time.

Applications for the movement's summer program, Ramah Seminar, are up, however, compared to last year, she said.

Bronfman Fellowships runs a similar program for Israeli high school students in New York, and their parents "were just as anxious at having their children come to America as Canadian and American families were about their children coming to Israel," Voorwinde said.

Students entering Grade 12 in 2016 can apply to the Bronfman Fellowship at www.bronfman.org. ■

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Defence experts back IDF's 2014 Gaza claim

Report says Israel set a standard no other army can match

JUDAH ARI GROSS
JERUSALEM

Armies of the world would be rendered far less effective if they were forced to operate under the same restrictions as the Israel Defence Force (IDF) during last summer's Gaza campaign, a group of former military and defence leaders from nine countries claim in a new report released Dec. 11.

Following a months-long investigation into the 50-day conflict, the High Level Military Group (HLMG) – made up of retired generals and defence officials from Germany, Colombia, India, Spain, Australia, the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Italy – found that Israel not only abided by the laws of armed conflict, but far surpassed their requirements, despite damning reports by the UN and non-governmental organizations that accused the IDF of potential war crimes.

The group had already defended Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip earlier this year, submitting their preliminary findings to the UN Human Rights Commission's probe into the operation, but the group's final 80-page report goes far beyond their initial assessment.

"Our findings were diametrically opposed to the UN report," Col. Richard Kemp, one of the document's authors and the former commander of British forces in Afghanistan, told the *Times of Israel*, blasting the lack of military expertise by the United Nations commission that investigated the conflict. "The UN report was done too quickly and was done by the wrong people."

The HLMG, which includes, the former chairman of the NATO military committee, the former chief of staff of the Italian army, a former U.S. ambassador-at-large on war crimes and the former director-general of the Indian Defence Intelligence Agency, was formed by the Friends of Israel Initiative, a group created by former Spanish prime minister José María Aznar in 2010 to fight an "unprecedented campaign of delegitimation against Israel."

The UN and NGO reports were investigated by human rights experts, not military personnel who are familiar with the laws of armed conflict. Because of that, the commissions investigating Operation Protective Edge arrived at biased and inaccurate conclusions, Kemp said.

A central issue in all of these reports is that of civilian casualties. One of the problems, the report found, was the UN accepted Hamas' figures for combatant vs. civilian casualties, which put the ratio at close to 70 per cent non-combatants of the 2,000 or so deaths, compared to the dramatically lower 50 per cent that Israel claims.

A new report shows the IDF abided by the laws of armed conflict during the 2014 conflict in Gaza. ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

The HLMG found Hamas' numbers to be rife with inconsistencies, such as the "inclusion of duplicate names, incorrect ages, combat-related deaths caused by Hamas or its affiliate organizations, such as in the case of misfired rockets, and deaths not related to the hostilities but classified as such."

More problematic, however, is that the UN and NGO reports were researched from a human rights standpoint and treated the concept of civilian deaths as inherently wrong, even when those incidents occurred under legally acceptable circumstances, Kemp said.

"Human rights law was not the right set of laws to govern this; the laws of armed conflict are," he added.

Commissions investigating the conflict should have looked to see that everything feasibly was done to avoid the deaths of non-combatants, not that casualties didn't happen, as they inevitably will in wartime. That standard of zero civilian deaths is an impossible one, Kemp said.

The 11 former army and governmental officials found that Israel adopted a far higher level of restraint than other militaries citing Israel's now famous "knock on the roof" technique of dropping a non-explosive ordnance to alert residents that their building is about to be bombed, the telephone calls and leaflets dropped warning non-combatants to leave the scene of an impending attack and numerous examples of missions cancelled due to potential non-combatant casualties.

"That threshold isn't something other nations could handle," Kemp said. This standard is a hindrance to military expediency, Kemp argued. "You can't achieve that aim and also be effective." The group met with representatives throughout Israel's defence and political structure, from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to enlisted soldiers who fought in Gaza, while gathering material for their report.

Kemp, who also previously led the UK Joint Intelligence Committee's international terrorism team, has defended Israeli military actions against Gaza before, testifying before the UN's Goldstone commission on Israel's 2008-2009 Operation Cast Lead. The rest of the group, however, had only brief or tangential connections with the IDF, and many came in to the group anticipating to find indications of Israeli crimes, Kemp said.

But the HLMG found practically none, laying the blame for the vast majority of civilian casualties at the feet of Hamas instead, who they claim instituted a deliberate policy to cause as many Palestinian civilian deaths as possible in order to wage a PR war against Israel. The report lauded not only Israel's aforementioned operational measures to avoid civilian casualties, but also its overall strategic and organizational structure, which required the constant involvement of Military Advocate General representatives to ensure that the laws of warfare and rules of engagement were respected.

The report noted that Israel tried multiple times to avoid and end the conflict through diplomatic means, only to be rebuffed by Hamas at every turn.

The report decries Hamas' use of human shields and confirms many of the allegations levied against the terrorist group, namely that they used hospitals, UN schools, ambulances and other "sensitive sites" in order to force Israel into compromising positions and bring about international condemnation against the Jewish state.

In addition to the military aspects of last summer's operation, the HLMG focused considerable attention on Hamas' manipulation of the media, noting both censorship and "proactive fabrication" as tools in the terror group's PR arsenal.

Hamas forcibly prevented the media from taking and publishing photographs of wounded fighters, only allowing pictures of wounded civilians, the report found. Hamas would also "prepare" the scenes after Israeli strikes, removing weapons and fighters, before allowing journalists into the area in order to make it appear as though only civilians were hit in the attacks.

The HLMG blamed not only the terror organization for perpetuating these acts of bullying and chicanery, but also the international media for not being more forthright about the clearly distorted and censored view of Gaza that they were reporting. Though some news outlets later admitted to the manipulations, the HLMG found, the damage was already done.

The same might be said of the HLMG report. With reports by the UN, Amnesty International, Israel's Breaking the Silence, and others, the HLMG document may be too little too late.

In addition to their public release of the document, the group already has plans to discuss their findings with the U.S. Congress, and members of the HLMG will also speak in their home countries. Though there are not yet official plans in the works, the group also hopes to present their findings to the UN, the International Criminal Court and other global bodies, Kemp said. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

Obama calls on Israel, Palestinians to work together to diffuse tensions

JTA
NEW YORK

U.S. President Barack Obama, making a surprise address, told a *Ha'aretz*-sponsored conference in New York that Israelis and Palestinians must "exercise restraint."

"Inexcusable violence has taken too many lives – Israelis, Palestinians, Americans and others," Obama said via teleconference on Dec. 13 at the liberal Israeli newspaper's event with the New Israel Fund. "I've been clear that Palestinian leaders have to condemn the ongoing attacks and stop the cycle. Individuals responsible for violence, including violence against Palestinians, have to be brought to justice, and we call on both sides to work to diffuse tensions, exercise restraint, prevent more loss of life and restore hope.

"Of course, the best way to reduce tensions and ensure Israel's own security is to continue working in concrete ways towards a two-state solution."

A spate of attacks since October has killed 22 people, according to the Israeli government. In the same period, 106 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli soldiers, police or civilians either while committing attacks or in their aftermath, on suspicion that they were about to carry out attacks or clashes with Israeli forces, *Reuters* reported last week.

The U.S. leader, who was not on the program of speakers, told the audience of approximately 600 at the Roosevelt Hotel that they would always have a partner for peace in him and in the United States.

"Peace is necessary, just and possible," Obama said.

Israel's president, Reuven Rivlin, in his keynote address noted his visit last week with Obama and emphasized that "the president's commitment to a secure Israel is beyond any question."

Saying peace is important for Israel's safety and security, Rivlin said, "For that we need to think outside of the box."

The conference, the first of its kind for *Ha'aretz* in the United States, is designed to provide a "unique platform for robust debate and intelligent reflection" on key issues regarding Israel, according to the newspaper.

"Isolated under [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu, the editors of Israel's leading liberal newspaper are coming to New York to try to restore a sense of reason," Aluf Benn, editor-in-chief of *Ha'aretz*, wrote in the *Daily Beast* on Dec 11. "We begin by turning to our American friends whose voices have been drowned out for too long."

Rivlin, saying he sometimes is "annoyed and angry" by what he reads in *Ha'aretz*, said however that the newspaper is "a beacon for freedom of expression in Israel" and "I am here today because I believe the free market of ideas is a holy principle."

With Breaking the Silence – an Israeli organization of military veterans that accuses Israeli soldiers of mistreating Palestinians – presenting on one of the panels, Rivlin praised the morality of the Israel Defence Forces and earned vigorous applause.

"The IDF does everything in its power to keep the highest moral standard possible, even under impossible conditions," he said, adding that no other army in the world is as moral.

Tzipi Livni, a Knesset lawmaker from the centre-left Zionist Union party and Israel's former justice minister, in her address criticized the settlements.

"Settlements don't give security to Israel," she said, "settlements take security from Israel."

Saeb Erekat, the secretary-general of the PLO and a leading negotiator for the Palestinians, said the source of the current violence is failed peace talks.

"When every day we bury our loved ones – it's for one thing," Erekat said. "It's our failure to achieve peace. It's our failure to achieve a two-state solution." He begged the audience not to give up on the idea.

Erekat insisted that Israel has a partner for peace with the Palestinians, saying the conflict with Israel is purely political. He also called the Islamic State terrorist group "criminals and thugs," saying they have nothing to do with Islam. ■

Israel has an interest in stopping global warming, Netanyahu says

JTA
JERUSALEM

Israel "will do its part" to help slow global warming under the climate agreement signed in Paris, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

"Like the other countries, we have an interest in ensuring that global warming, if it will not be halted, will at least be slowed down – and Israel will do its part," Netanyahu said last Sunday at the weekly Cabinet meeting of the agreement signed by 196 countries on Dec. 12 in Paris after nearly two weeks of negotiations.

The agreement seeks to reduce greenhouse gases emissions, which are blamed for global warming.

"This is a complex international mission. It is built on the premise that large and small countries alike will not deviate from it," Netanyahu said. "This demands international discipline, which is not easy, but for the good of humanity, I hope that it will be found. It will certainly be found in the State of Israel."

Benjamin Netanyahu

The prime minister cited the fact that Israel is a leader in wastewater purification technologies, recycling and water desalination, and has a national plan for alternatives to oil.

"We will reduce greenhouse gas emissions on behalf of future generations," Netanyahu pledged.

Israel was represented at the talks by Environmental Protection Minister Avi Gabbay and other Knesset members. The Israeli government presented a target of reducing the country's growth in greenhouse gas emissions by 25 per cent by 2030, according to *Ha'aretz*.

"History will remember this day," U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said after the agreement was passed. "The Paris agreement on climate change is a monumental success for the planet and its people."

The agreement is considered a major diplomatic achievement for the Obama administration, which has made climate change a signature issue, despite major opposition from congressional Republicans. ■

Trump brushes off Bibi's comments

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
WASHINGTON

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump says that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's criticism of his widely condemned calls to ban Muslim entry to the United States was "modest," but still "inappropriate."

In an interview to *CNN* aired last Sunday the GOP front-runner brushed off the dropped meeting and Netanyahu's comments rejecting the ban.

Netanyahu "did [condemn the call], and that was sort of interesting," Trump said. "He modestly condemned [the statements], and I thought it was sort of inappropriate that he condemned them, but that's OK. He wanted to condemn them, that's what he does."

Netanyahu, Trump remarked, did not reject his comments about Muslims outright, and he insisted he could still meet the prime minister anytime he wanted.

"They're not distancing themselves [from me]," Trump said of the Israeli government. "I had a meeting [set up] with Netanyahu. I could be at the meeting right now."

He also told *CNN* that his Muslim friends back him for highlighting the problems of extremism within their community, even if they don't support the idea of a travel ban.

Trump last week cancelled a scheduled trip to Israel, after Netanyahu rejected his comments but indicated that he would still meet with the businessman. He said in an interview Dec. 10 that he was postponing the slated Dec. 28 visit for "lots of different reasons," including a desire to take pressure off Netanyahu.

On Twitter, Trump said the meeting with Netanyahu would take place "after I become president of the U.S."

After the visit was postponed, Netanyahu's office said it had nothing to do with the announcement and he had not spoken to Trump about the matter.

Trump's call last week for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" drew anger in the United States and around the world. In Israel, 37 lawmakers signed a petition calling on Netanyahu to cancel his planned meeting with Trump.

A Reuters/Ipsos survey released Dec. 11 showed that 35 per cent of Republican voters support Trump, putting him far ahead of his closest rival Ben Carson, who has the backing of just 12 per cent of voters. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

OPINION

A nation that still dwells alone

Gerald Steinberg

Theodor Herzl's Zionist vision was of a state that would be like any other, bringing an end to anti-Semitism, isolation and vulnerability.

However, after 67 years of sovereignty, this is far from the reality. Israel is the focus of a new form of anti-Semitism, expressed through double standards and obsessive attacks, not only from Palestinians and many Muslim countries, but also among western elites. As a consequence, many Israelis and Jews have given up on the so-called "international community", the media, "human rights" groups and global bodies such as the United Nations and Red Cross.

The use of double standards and singling-out of Israel was most recently reflected in the exclusion of Israeli victims from the outpouring of sympathy and condolences following what are often referred to as "global terror attacks" in Paris, Mali, and California. On Facebook memorial pages, in media coverage, and in official memorial ceremonies, the Israeli flag is absent, as are the names and faces of the victims. Between Sept. 13 and Dec. 6, 2015, there were 88 stabbings, 32 shootings, and 14 car rammings, killing 22 and wounding 215 Israelis.

Among many western politicians, in the media and for groups claiming to promote human rights, there is more than a hint of the view that the Israeli victims "had it coming", and that the terrorists are the real victims. A typical BBC headline declared "Palestinian shot dead after Jerusalem attack kills two," turning terrorists into victims. Similarly, *Sky News* told viewers: "Palestinians shot dead in alleged knife attacks."

In a different way, the EU's Ambassador to Israel, Lars Faaborg-Andersen, tried to justify the European double standard by alleging that "ISIS [Islamic State] is organized terror, and it should be countered with force. Palestinian terror should be met with diplomatic and political means."

This moral inversion, including from many political leaders, led to an angry response from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, expressing the wider fury. "Whoever condemned the attacks in France needs to condemn the attacks in Israel. It's the same terror. Whoever does not do this is a hypocrite and blind."

> *The prize for hypocrisy goes to Swedish Foreign Minister*

However, Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Lofven, rejected Netanyahu's demand. In a response to a question, he stated, "No, it [meaning the Palestinian attacks against Israelis] is not classified as [terrorism]. There is an international classification regarding what constitutes or does not constitute [terror]. As far as I know, the [stabbing attacks in Israel] are not defined as terror." After some criticism, he issued what was termed a clarification, claiming "that it was unclear if the knife attacks are organized by a group classified as a terrorist organization." This only served to highlight the problem.

But the double standards denying that Israelis are equal victims, and the repletion of Palestinian justifications for terror, are only part of the problem. In parallel, a widespread campaign is underway to delegitimize the Israeli defence against the terrorists, while approving the forceful (and late) responses following the attacks in Paris, Brussels, and San Bernardino.

A number of anti-Israel "human rights" groups, including Amnesty International, have exploited the stabbing attacks to repeat blood libels, again accusing Israel of using "excessive force". The NGO created the fiction of "heavily armed soldiers and police wearing body armour facing a possible knife attack", in contrast to the reality of unarmed victims, including children and elderly civilians.

The prize for hypocrisy goes to Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom, who, echoing Amnesty, accused Israel of conducting "extrajudicial executions" of Palestinian terrorists. (She also mentioned "Palestinian frustration" with Israel as a factor in the Paris attacks.) Following Israeli outrage, a confused "correction" was issued which, like her prime minister's, only highlighted the problem.

By singling out the Jewish state repeatedly and in so many ways, Western politicians and "progressive" leaders are reinforcing the widely held view among Israelis that Herzl's goal is a mirage. For this group, we have always been a "nation that dwells alone" and nothing has changed. ■

SeeJN | Lighting the chanukiyah

FLASH90 PHOTO

Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef, the Sephardi chief rabbi of Israel, lights the Chanukah candles on the large menorah at the Western Wall in Jerusalem's Old City, on Dec. 13, joined by chief of police Roni Alsheikh and Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovich, the rabbi of the Western Wall (hidden).

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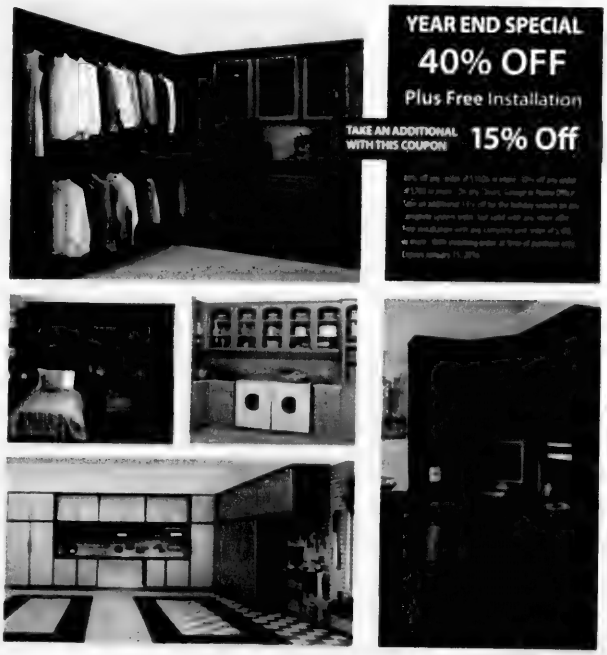

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Jewish Life

Clockwise from right a Magen David in 12 colours, MARILYN LAZAR PHOTO and a menorah inside the synagogue FILE PHOTO The Sinagoga Major de Barcelona WIKIPEDIA PHOTO

Barcelona home to one of the Europe's oldest shuls

MARILYN LAZAR
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Is it the oldest synagogue in Spain? The oldest Sephardi synagogue anywhere? It seems that there are more claims about this minuscule edifice than actual square footage. Suffice it to say, it is one of the oldest synagogues in Europe and was once the main synagogue of Barcelona.

The Sinagoga Major de Barcelona is tucked deep into the Barrio Gothico or Gothic Quarter of Barcelona and it wasn't easy to find. Remains of the ancient synagogue still survive in the Call Jueu, or old Jewish Quarter, very near the Plaça de Sant Jaume, right in the middle of this Barcelona neighbourhood.

In contrast with the well-marked and heavily-trodden path to La Seu, the huge Cathedral of Barcelona, and other Gothic churches, including Santa Maria del Pi in whose shadows it literally sits, the ancient synagogue of Barcelona in the old Jewish Quarter is a small gem that almost requires a treasure hunt to locate. Even armed with a warning that it isn't well-marked and wearing good walking shoes as I tracked back and forth multiple times on endless narrow cobblestone streets, I was confounded by my search.

I heard Hebrew being spoken multiple times during eight days in Barcelona. In fact, it was easier to find Israelis visiting Barcelona than to find the old Jewish Quarter of the city. Come with a map and double check directions.

When we finally wended our way in, we were joined by accidental tourists, not Jewish, nor having ever heard of the synagogue, let alone seeking it; they rather fell upon it by accident and found the site fascinating enough to explore.

The old synagogue is a museum now, with a short presentation put on by volunteers and supported by a modest entrance fee of 2.50 euros. The Sinagoga Major attracted as many as 20,000 visitors in a recent year. Those that visit enjoy personalized attention and patient answers to all questions from a member of the Jewish community.

The Antiga Sinagoga in the medieval Jewish Quarter of Barcelona lay in the shadow of the cathedral both literally and figuratively. Under the careful scrutiny of the Catholic Church, no other religion's temple height or size was permitted to exceed that of the smallest church in town. Based on archival reconstruction of the route followed by a 13th-century tax collector that ended at the Sinagoga Major, research pointed to the current site as the location of the Ancient Synagogue.

Over the centuries, additional storeys were added to the building, which was used for many purposes including as a jail and as a warehouse. Its original use was forgotten. The Call Association of Barcelona, comprised of historians of many different religions, has taken on its recovery and restoration. They are united in their belief in the importance of preserving the Jewish history of the area. Excavation began in 1996.

The original exterior of the building was constructed in compliance with religious requirements in that it faces eastward toward Jerusalem and has two windows. In fact, the eastward orientation of the building toward Jerusalem broke with the northwest/southeast alignment of the streets in its neighbourhood. Discovering this wall was pivotal in recognizing the Jewish history of the building.

The building re-opened to the public as a synagogue and museum in 2002. The presentation is given in what was once the main section of the synagogue. There is no access to the original women's section, which is now behind a wall and part of another property. There aren't regular services held at the Sinagoga Major, but it can be used for festive occasions. In 2003, a Canadian couple was the first to be married there in more than 600 years. A 500-year-old Torah scroll was donated to the synagogue in 2006. The original structure dates back to Roman times. There are many interesting details to note including the number 18 carved into a stone.

There was a strong Jewish presence in Barcelona during medieval times and until 1391. By the time the Jews were officially expelled from Spain in 1492, they had been gone from Barcelona for 100 years, either forced to convert or fled. The synagogue is located at No. 5 Marlet St. Explore. Find it on your own or arrange a private guide for a walking tour of the Jewish quarter including the Ancient Synagogue through your concierge at any major hotel. ■

YIDDISH CORNER

שלאָף מײַן קינד

GERRY KANE
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אפֿשר איז עס אַ נאַרישקײַט וואָס איז מיר אַרײַנגעפֿאַלן אין קאָפּ. איך מײַן אַז אַלע וואָס האָבן נעהאָט אַ באָבע אָדער אַ מאַמע וואָס האָט נערעדט יידיש צו די קינדער האָט אויך געזונגען צו די קינדער שלום עליכמס ווינליד "שלאָף מײַן קינד." איך נעדענק נאָך ווי היימיש ווי די מאַמע האָט נעהאַלטן מײַן ברודערל משהן און נעזונגען

שלאָף מײַן קינד, שלאָף כסדר
דינען וועל איך דיר א ליד.
אַז דו מײַן קינד וועסט עלטער ווערן,
וועסטו ווײַס אַן אונטערשיד. *

וואָס איך האָב דאָן נישט נעוווסט איז אַז ליד וואָס מען זינגט אומעטום ווו עס נעפינען זיך יידישע קינדער איז נישט קיין פֿאַלקסליד הונדערטער יאָר אלט נעשריבן פון ווער ווייס ווער.

דאָס ליד איז " צום ערשטן מאָל אַרויס אין יאָר 1892 אין קול-מבשר צו דער יידישער פֿאַלקס ביבליאָטעק" וואָס שלום עליכם האָט אַנעהויבן אַרויסגעבן אין יאָר 1888. די מעלאָדיע איז נעשאַפֿן נעוואָרן פון יידישן קאָמפּאָזיטאָר דוד קאָוואַנאָוסקי.

די פֿראַגע איז פֿאַרוואָס האָבן יידן אין די שטעטלעך און נעסלעך איבער מיזרח אייראָפּע נעטמען שלום עליכמס "וינליד" צום האַרצן? ס'איז נישט אַ ווייס לידעלע. די מעמע זינגט הענג עלנסקײַט, הונגער א האָפענונג פֿאר אַ בעסערער שענערער וועלט פֿאר איר קינד. נעדענסקס, דאָס ליד איז נעשריבן אין א צייט פון גרויסן עקאָנאָמישן און פּאָליטישן איבערקער. מילאָנען יידן האָבן פֿאַרפאַקט ייערע קינדער און קערבלעך און זיך נעטמען צו די וועגן און נעלאָפֿן קיין אַמעריקע. אין שלום עליכמס "וינליד" וואַרט די מאַמע אויף א בריוו פון איר מאן וואָס איז פֿריער נעפֿאָרן קיין אַמעריקע צו נעפינען אַרבעט, דירה און פּרנסה צו קויפֿן די ריידע בילעטן צו דער גאָלדענער מדינה.

שלאָף מײַן קינד, שלאָף כסדר
דינען וועל איך דיר א ליד,
אַז דו מײַן קינד וועסט עלטער ווערן,
וועסטו ווײַס אַן אונטערשיד.

ביז דײַן ווינל זינגט די מאַמע,
זינגט א ליד און וויגט;
ווען ס'איז אַ מאָל פֿאַרשטיין מסתמא,
וואָס די האָט נעמיינט.

אין אַמעריקע איז דער טאַטע
דיינער, זונעניו!
ביסט א קינד נאָך, שלאָף לעת־עתה,
שלאָף ששט, שלאָף לידלו.

דאָס אַמעריקע איז פֿאר ייִדן,
האָנט מען, נאָר א גליק,
און פֿאר יידן א נרעדן,
עפּעס אַן אַנטיק.

דאָרטן עסט מען אין דער וואָכן
חלה, זונעניו,
ייִכעלעך וועל איך דיר דאָרט קאָכן,
שלאָף ששט, שלאָף לידלו.

נאָר דערווייל לאָמיר האָפֿן,
אוי, וואָס קאָן מען טאָן?
כ'וואָלט שוין לאָנג צוזן אים נעסטראָפֿן–
וויס איך נים ווהין.

נאָט וועס הייסן, וועס ער שיקן
בריוולעך, זונעניו!
נאָר אין ניכן אונדז באַגליקן,
שלאָף ששט,שלאָף לידלו.

ער וועס שיקן צוואַנציק דאָלאָר,
זיין פֿאַרסטעס דערצו,
און וועס נעמען, לעבען אַל ער,
אונדז אַהינצו.

ער וועס אַלץ פון אונדזערס וועגן
שאַפֿן, זונעניו,
און וועס פֿאָרן אונדז אקעגן,
שלאָף ששט, שלאָף לידלו.

ער וועס כאַפּן דיך צום קושן,
סאָבצן אַזש פֿאר פֿרייד;
איך וועל קוועלן, טרערן נישן,
ווייגן שטילערהייט.

ביז עס קומט דאָס נוסע קוויטל,
דאַרף מען, זונעניו!
שלאָפֿן, ס'איז אַ סייער מיטל, –
ליולינקע לידלו.

*יוסף און חנה מלאָסעק, פערל פון דער יידישער פּאָעזיע, י.ל. פרץ, פֿאַרלאַג, ישראל, 1974

Teen tryouts for JCC Maccabi hockey team announced

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

If it's early August, it must be hockey season. At least it will be at next summer's JCC Maccabi Games in Stamford, Conn.

The Games, which will be held Aug. 7 to 12, will now include an ice hockey component, to replace an inline hockey competition.

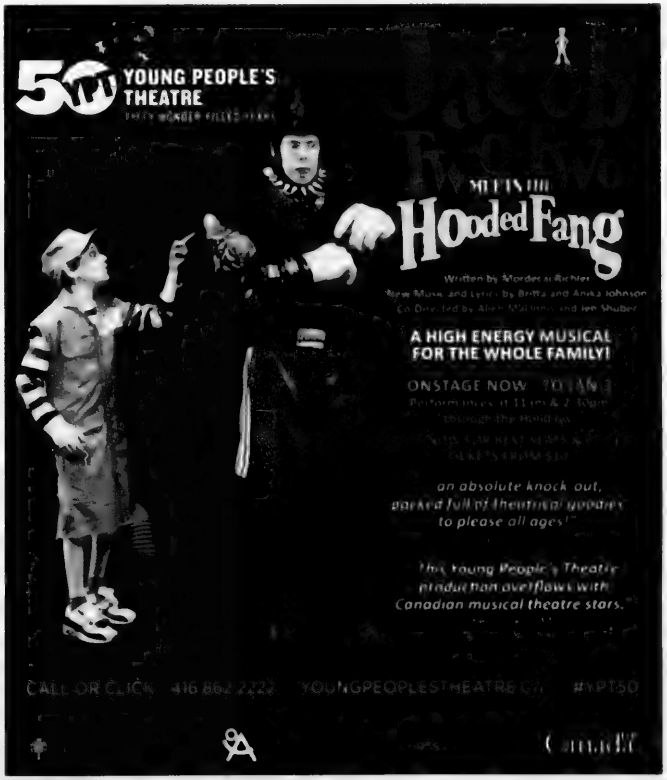
Tryouts for the Toronto team will be held on Dec. 17, 6:30-8 p.m., at the Rosemount Community Centre on New Westminster Drive in Vaughan. A second round of tryouts will take place in January, said Alex Voihanski, managing director of JCC Chai Sports, who is assembling the team.

Any player who will be no younger than 13 and no older than 16 by Aug. 1, 2016, is welcome to attend.

"There has been a push by several delegations including ours to make this change. It is much easier to recruit and attract more players," said Voihanski.

"The sport of inline hockey has really deteriorated, especially in Canada. With most competitive ice hockey players playing year round, inline hockey has seen a massive dip in numbers," he said.

The Toronto team will be coached by Spencer Hyman, who was part of the Canadian gold medal hockey team at the 2013 Maccabiah Games in Israel. Hyman played at the University of Michigan and is now coach of Markham Royals of the OJHL, Voihanski said. ■



THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 17, 2015

Writer witnessed the horrors of prewar Soviet Union

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Rhea Clyman, an accomplished journalist born to a Jewish family in Toronto in 1904, wrote many front-page newspaper stories in the late 1920s and 1930s about political events and their tragic human consequences in Russia, Ukraine and Germany, but died in near-obscurity in New York in 1981.

Clyman wrote rare and chilling eyewitness accounts of the Soviet Union's government-induced famine in the Ukraine known as the Holodomor. She also travelled to Murmansk through treacherous terrain by automobile and train, and exposed the inhumane conditions of gulags and labour camps in Russia's far north.

After becoming the first foreign correspondent expelled from Russia in more than a decade, she reported on events in Hitler's Germany with equal fearlessness. Her stories appeared in the *London Daily Express* and the *Toronto Telegram*, where editors would often place them prominently on the first page and continue them inside.

Jars Balan, a scholar of Ukrainian studies at the University of Alberta, recently discovered Clyman's stories, and has been researching her life with the intention of writing a book about her. Balan recently presented a talk on the little-remembered journalist at a meeting of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto.

An intrepid and determined person, Clyman didn't let the fact that she was a single woman hold her back, Balan said. Neither was she much deterred by the fact that she was missing part of a leg due to a streetcar accident in childhood.

Clyman studied business and commerce in Toronto, then went to New York and worked briefly as a secretary. She moved successively to London, Paris and Germany, acquiring an impressive smattering of French and German in turn. "She had a gift for picking up languages, and was very bright," Balan said. "When she went to Moscow, she obviously learned Russian well enough that she didn't need a translator."

The timing of her arrival in Russia in late 1928 "was auspicious," Balan said. "The Soviet Union, under Stalin's leadership, was just embarking on the first of its five-year plans to rapidly industrialize the Russian economy and forcibly collectivize Russian agriculture."

Previously a supporter from afar of Soviet reforms, the 24-year-old Canadian was appalled by the realities she witnesses on the ground. She wrote candid reports about the horrific plight of the prisoners she encountered in the remote northern forests and mines where they had been deported, and where they were fed just enough calories per day to keep them alive. "The Nazis actually learned about concentration camps from the Russians," Balan said.

At Solovetsky Island Prison, an area that was supposedly closed to foreigners, Clyman typically bluffed her way through various perils. "She was incredibly resourceful and she was fearless," Balan said. "The woman had moxie. She didn't pull any punches."

When she told her editor she was going to Ukraine, he bade her farewell and said he had already written her obituary. She and her companions drove through countless deserted Ukrainian farming villages where the villagers had already been deported. The few people remaining were so desperate for sustenance they were down on all fours, eating grass like cattle.

"In this area the famine didn't even really take hold until a few months later," Balan said. "People were dying 25,000 a day just of starvation. We're not including the people they shot or the ones who died in the gulag."

Towards the end of the evening, Balan said he was interested in speaking with anyone in the audience who might have known Clyman or been related to her, and could tell him more about her. He seemed delighted when an elderly woman identified herself as Clyman's first cousin. ■

"Truth, Does It Matter? Is It Constructive?"

A 1933 *Telegram* article on the Soviet Union Rhea Clyman wrote upon her return to Toronto.

> *People were dying 25,000 a day just of starvation.*
>
> **Jars Balan, a scholar of Ukrainian studies at the University of Alberta**

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Trending L.A. fashion brand *Unkosher Market* is secretly Canadian. Read more at **www.cjnews.com/culture**

CHAT grad making waves on the big screen

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

After *The CJN* profiled filmmaker Allan Ungar in September 2014, CHAT invited him to speak at his alma mater on career day.

"I guess they didn't want to just limit it to lawyers and doctors; they wanted to give the kids an idea that there are other things you can branch out into," he says with a laugh.

Obviously, CHAT has a bevy of esteemed, creative alumni, but Ungar, now 27, is making waves on the big screen. His second feature film, *Gridlocked*, had its world premiere at the Fantastic Fest in Austin, Texas before making its Canadian debut at the Toronto After Dark Film Festival in October.

Gridlocked, an action movie that Ungar co-wrote and directed, stars Danny Glover and Trish Stratus. Canadian distributor Mongrel Media recently picked it up.

Lately though, Ungar has been taking a break from directing in order to write and produce.

This past summer he co-produced *Lower Bay* that stars Christopher Lloyd – best known as Doc Brown in the *Back To The Future* trilogy – about the abandoned – and apparently haunted – subway platform beneath Toronto's busy Bay Station.

Ungar, says there's something distinctly Canadian about the movie because it's actually set in Toronto, unlike the many productions that use this city as a stand-in for place like Chicago and New York.

Allan Ungar on the underground set of *Lower Bay*, his newest project which is about a haunted subway station platform.

That's part of what drew Ungar to the project. "And to be honest, I had always wanted to go down to that abandoned tunnel. I just wanted a chance to go down and see what it looked like," he says.

Despite working underground with a cast and crew, he admits that the experience was a spooky one. "In the back of your mind," he says, "you're sort of like, some weird stuff definitely took place here about 40 to 50 years ago."

Along with the inherent creepiness of the set, *Lower Bay* features horror movie legends, including the executive producer of *The Ring* and scream queen Rose McGowan.

Beyond producing *Lower Bay*, Ungar is stepping outside of his comfort zone in his latest writing projects. He's currently working with director Dominic Sena (*Swordfish*, *Gone in 60 Seconds*) to pen an adaptation of the New York Times best-selling romance novel *Ugly Love*.

Yet, he doesn't mind that it's a departure from his usual fare. "At the end of the day, I love movies and I appreciate a good story with great characters and resonance," he says while describing how he chooses his projects.

He's also pleased to working with Glover and Lloyd, two of his own movie heroes. "Within the span of a year, getting to work with these two old-timers that I really look up to and respect was really cathartic, it was a really neat experience."

As *The CJN* previously reported, Ungar spent some time in Los Angeles while taking a break from his undergraduate studies at York University. For now, he's eager to continue working in Toronto.

"I want to stay here," he says. "I think we have so many incredible resources, so many talented people. If I could stay here for the rest of my life and make movies, nothing would make me happier." ■

Miles Nadal JCC

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Members will be held at 750 Spadina Avenue in Room 318, on the 18th day of January, 2016 at 8:00 o'clock in the evening to:

a) Accept as Members of the Corporation those Members listed in good standing tabled and delivered by the Secretary of the Corporation.
b) Elect its Directors.
c) Approve the Financial Statements for the Corporation for the year ended August 31, 2015.
d) Appoint auditors and authorize the Directors to fix their remuneration
e) Ratify and approve all the acts, proceedings, transactions, commitments, contracts entered into, and undertakings given by or on behalf of the Corporation by the Board of Directors from the date of the last Annual General Meeting to the date hereof;
f) Transact such further and other business as may be properly brought before the meeting or any adjournments thereof

Members of the Corporation may be nominated by written petition signed by not less than twenty-five (25) persons, who are members and eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting. The petitions must be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee and must be received by the Chairman of the Nominations Committee at least fifteen (15) days prior to the Annual Meeting, after which time no further nominations shall be accepted

Proxy forms for those unable to attend the meeting may be obtained from the Business Office of the Corporation during business hours.

DATED the 14th day of December, 2015
BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Frank Jacobs, *Secretary*

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The wartime pope and his successors

NORMAN RAVVIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Pope-watching is a challenging business these days. Pope Francis, like John Paul II, asserts his position on pressing issues of political and social importance. Last month in Nairobi, Francis toured urban slums and spoke out against what he called "new forms of colonialism, which would make African countries parts of a machine, cogs on a gigantic wheel."

While he spoke out against the threat of "faceless private developers" encroaching on slum playgrounds, he criticized countries that "adopt policies typical of the culture of waste, like those aimed at lowering the birthrate."

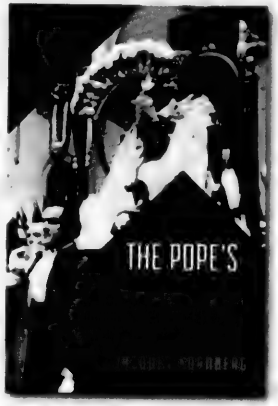
Without the full transcript of Francis's Nairobi speech, it is impossible to guess at how a "culture of waste" would be propelled by a lower birth rate. But certainly, inveighing against birth control in a developing country places him in the company of all the modern popes, including the socially conservative Pope John Paul II, reaching back to Pope Leo XIII, whose papacy began in 1878. In its foreign policy, the papacy has been unremittingly guided by the belief that religious principles trump all other forms of political idealism.

The repercussions of this phenomenon are the focus of *The Pope's Dilemma: Pius XII Faces Atrocities and Genocide in the Second World War.* One understands Francis's public performance after reading Kornberg's detailed study of Pope Pius XII's response to the German destruction of European Jewish communities. Jacques Kornberg develops his comparative approach by examining the equally passive responses of Pius's predecessors to human catastrophes in Belgium, Armenia and Ethiopia.

Pius XII ascended to the papacy in March of 1939, with Europe well under the shadow of war. Before this, he played a key role as the Vatican Secretary of State – in this position he was known as Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli. It was Pacelli, in 1933, who negotiated the Concordat between the Church and Hitler. This agreement reflected the popularity of Nazism among German Catholics, and it was aimed, above all else, at preventing moves by the German Reich to further dismantle German church authority, educational institutions, and the rights of religious marriage.

This Concordat between the Vatican and the Nazi Reich – now a historical detail that is largely overshadowed by wartime events – encapsulates the Vatican's guiding principles with regard to the rise of Nazism in competition with the Christian faith. It would stand, too, as a set of guiding principles by which to respond to atrocities perpetrated by Catholic Nazis, as well as to knowledge of widespread dispossession and mass murder of Jews in occupied Europe.

Kornberg highlights the Vatican's unwillingness to voice direct opposition to wartime events by singling out the rare European cardinal or bishop who wrote, often privately and in great agitation, to ask the pope to speak out. In Hungary, Apostolic Nuncio (or ambassador) Angelo Rotta publicly petitioned Hungarian ministers in response to the deportation of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz. In Poland the church was a direct target of German persecution. Kornberg tells the tale in numbers. In one archdiocese – that of prewar Posen – there were "681 secular priests, and 147 in religious orders, making 828 prior to the occupation. By October 1941, of these, 74 had been executed or had died in concentration camps, 41 were in jail or concentration camps, and 120 had been deported to other parts of Poland .... Of 441 churches in the archdiocese, 396 were sealed shut by the authorities or expropriated for other uses, leaving 30 churches for Poles to worship in and 15 for ethnic Germans."



The Pope's Dilemma: Pius XII Faces Atrocities and Genocide in the Second World War
By Jacques Kornberg

University of Toronto Press

> The Pope's Dilemma *paints a dark picture of the depiction of Jews in Vatican sources before and during the war.*

In response to this devastation the pope did not encourage Poles to actively resist German occupation, and offered little in response to "a barrage of pleas from Polish bishops and the Polish government-in-exile." The most outspoken among these was Archbishop Sapieha of Krakow, Poland's senior wartime cleric. Sapieha's secretaries were sent to a concentration camp, while Sapieha was tailed by the Gestapo. In the Vatican's view, in light of these events, appeasement of the German regime remained tantamount, since the "salvation of souls required pastoral care, the churches open, bishops in authority, priests available, and the sacraments at hand." Opposition, in the Vatican's view, would threaten "the church's role in the care of souls."

In the course of Kornberg's wide-ranging argument, which addresses prewar efforts and wartime in numerous European countries, he reiterates this equation as he examines Vatican foreign policy, the background discussions underlying this policy, as well as Pius XII's leadership.

The Pope's Dilemma paints a dark picture of the depiction of Jews in Vatican sources before and during the war. Europe's Jews were consistently characterized as perpetrators of deicide and as a threat. In the late 1930s, a characteristic piece in the Jesuit journal *Civiltà Cattolica* argued that Jews undermined Christian society. Upon the fall of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, in 1943, the Roman Church did not call for the abrogation of the Italian anti-Jewish decrees modelled on the German Nuremberg Laws. Rather, an exemption was added for Catholics of Jewish descent from the decrees' far-reaching goal of excluding Jews from civil society.

The reader's experience of Kornberg's detailed argument is akin to a weaker fighter at the hands of Muhammad Ali. Each new fact, scenario, anecdote is like a blow against which one has no argument or defence. The overall effect is one of defeat – Kornberg calls it "moral failure" – the absolute absence of anything redeeming in the historical tableaux.

Pope Pius XII "adhered," Kornberg tells us, "to the mainline Catholic theology of his time, which required that he avoid condemning Catholics complicit in Axis crimes, so as not to alienate them from the Church." His priorities, Kornberg adds, "were spiritual."

What can one say in response to this moral equation? Primo Levi's formulation was that morality should not be understood as laws handed down from on high, but instead, as rules of behaviour derived from actual experience and action.

When the present Pope looks out over a crowded Nairobi slum and inveighs against the "colonial" character of birth control, one might think a translator has somehow failed the journalist of record. But upon reading Kornberg's record of Pius XII's response to German genocidal acts, one understands Francis's logic in terms clear and astonishing. ■

Norman Ravvin is a writer and teacher in Montreal.

CORRECTION

The Dec. 3 article "Art for seniors who are not artists" contained incorrect contact information. The email address for Martin Hirschberg is martin@hirschbergdesign.com. *The CJN* regrets the error.

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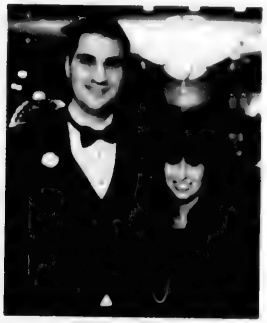
The Socialite

By Tara Fainstein

Seth and Daniella Greenspan, event chairs, Lori and John Ulmer, event chairs

Aryella Weisz, Lori Ulmer, Daniella Greenspan, Hadassa Pertman, Gatsby Gala chairs, Marissa Muscat, Emunah executive director, Tzipy Zwiebel, poker tournament chair



Yehuda and Rena Azoulay

Eddy and Aryella Weisz, event chairs, Rebecca Rotenberg Nadler, Emunah Toronto president, and Beri Nadler

Gatsby Gala

"The Roaring Twenties" was recreated at the Emunah Gatsby Gala in Toronto. Decked out in '20s fashion, the women sparkled and the men looked oh so dapper! Guests were treated to era-themed food, live jazz and the magic of an illusionist when taking breaks from the captivating blackjack and roulette tables. Emunah is one of the largest social service networks in Israel. Proceeds from the Gatsby Gala will fund programs and therapies that support high-risk children and families and provide early intervention with the aim of keeping families together. ■

– *The Socialite*

Eli and Renee Rubinstein and Hadassa and Jeremy Pertman

Ariel, Sarena and David Koschitzky

Jack and Doris Bistricer and Hindy and Asher Bistricer

Hananel and Sherri Romer Segal, Daniella and Jeffery Silver

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What's New

DEC. 17 - DEC. 24

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Dec. 17

BOOK CLUB
Shaar Shalom Synagogue's book club discusses *The Boston Girl*, 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 19

TORAH STUDY
Allan Cooper leads the Torah study group today at Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

Sunday, Dec. 20

JEWISH RITUAL IN ART
Rachel Levin discusses "Jewish rituals as depicted in art," 7 p.m. at the Lodzer Synagogue. $10.

CLUB CHAVERUT
Club Chaverut presents the York Jazz Ensemble, nine instrumentalists and a vocalist, 1:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. $7/$10. RSVP **Rose** 905-764-8141.

Thursday, Dec. 24

MOVIE AND DINNER
Shaar Shalom Synagogue hosts a night of movies and Chinese food, 7 p.m. 905-889-4975.

MYTH OF THE RESURRECTION
Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "The myth of the resurrection," 8 p.m., Shaarei Tefillah Congregation. RSVP toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Baycrest is looking for volunteers who have special interests or talents to share with clients. Russian-speaking volunteers also needed. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572 or email volunteer@baycrest.org

Circle of Care and Jewish Hospice Programs is looking for volunteers to provide in-home visiting to individuals with a life-threatening illness. A 30-hour training course is provided, Contact **Arnold Foss,** 416-635-2860, ext. 433. or afoss@circleofcare.com

Wrapping up the holidays

As part of its tikkun olam program, Chabad Lubavitch of Markham, in partnership with Chai Lifeline, an organization that helps children suffering from serious illness, held an event last month to wrap Chanukah gifts for children who will be in the hospital during the holidays. More than 200 children with their families gathered to wrap Chanukah gifts and write cards for terminally ill children.

LEAVING ISRAEL
Rabbi Jonathan Zring discusses "May one leave Israel in a time of war?" Yeshivat Or Chaim, Dec. 25. *Shacharit* at 8:30 a.m.; Shiur at 10:30 a.m. Free, register at www.torontotorah.com/yk

YIDDISH CLASS
All levels of Yiddish classes are offered Sundays 10 a.m. to noon, Beth David Synagogue. $150/10 sessions. Starts Jan. 10. 416-635-2883, ext. 5189 or www.committeeforYiddish.com

HEBREW CLASSES
Temple Sinai offers beginners Hebrew class, Jan. 5- March 8, 7:30 p.m. and intermediate Hebrew, Jan. 7- March 17, 7:30 p.m. To register, call 416-487-4161.

MEDICAL ETHICS
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "Cosmetic surgery: when is it justified?" Jan. 11, 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Email info@torontotorah.com

MEDICAL ETHICS
Ora Zring discusses "What do we pray for when we pray for the sick?" Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m., at Yeshivat Or Chaim. Email info@torontotorah.com

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JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call Beth Feffer, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Comedian **Jack Newman** looks at the history of Jewish comedians, Jan. 14 and Jan. 21. Doors open at 1 p.m., program starts at 1:30 p.m.
- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9; Osteo-Circuit, physiotherapy for people with osteoporosis Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.; exercise program for people experiencing balance and mobility challenges, Wednesdays at noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Dec. 17, wellness lecture on "How people with dementia can stay safe while staying active," 1:30 p.m.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Social bridge, Thursdays, noon; creative circle Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., bring your handiwork.
- **National Council of Jewish Women-Aviva Chapter** is looking for senior women who would like to join, 416-633-5100.
- **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. 416-256-1892.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Deadline reminders: *There will be no issue Dec. 31. The deadline for the issue of Jan. 7 is Dec. 21. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email* **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

◗ **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. **Judi** 416-785-0941.
◗ **Shaar Shalom Synagogue.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
◗ **Beth Emeth Synagogue.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.
◗ **Temple Har Zion.** Mah-jong at 1 p.m.; Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com.
◗ **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge, mah-jong and canasta, Thursdays, 1:30-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
◗ **Beth Sholom Synagogue.** Creative exercise, lunch and cards, Wednesdays at noon. 416-783-6103.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.
◗ Yiddish conversation, Mondays, Jan. 11- March 14, 1:30 p.m.
◗ Beginner mah-jong, Wednesdays, Jan. 13 - Feb. 17, 10:30 a.m.
◗ Bridge level 1, Thursdays, Jan. 21 - March 10, 10 a.m.
◗ Sports with Jay runs Jan. 12-March 1, 4:45 p.m.
◗ JCC players after school music theatre program runs Jan. 6- March 9, 6:30 p.m.
◗ Acrylic painting with **Leon Soriano** runs Jan. 5- March 29, 9:30 a.m. or 1:45 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org
◗ Register for winter programs. Programs start as early as Jan. 4.
◗ Subscribe now to the Toronto Jewish Film Society's 38th season, ext. 139.
◗ Bedtime stories in Hebrew: Children ages 3-6 and their families are invited to listen to bedtime stories and puppet shows, Dec. 20, 4:30 p.m.
◗ **Kenneth Bartlett** discusses "From Venetian villas to Toronto condos," Dec. 21, 1:30 p.m. Last part in the *Why does history matter today* lecture series.
◗ Register for pottery winter classes. Youth pottery, Mondays 4 p.m., Jan. 4- March 7; Adult pottery daytime, Tuesdays 9:30 a.m., Jan. 5- March 8; adult pottery evening, Wednesdays, 7 p.m., Jan. 6-March 9.
◗ It's a parent: Hebrew program for parents of babies under a year to discuss parenting, Mondays Jan. 4- Feb. 1, 10:30 a.m.
◗ Tuned-in parenting: Hebrew language workshop on parenting, Wednesdays Jan. 6- Feb. 3, 8 p.m. Email lizar@mnjcc.org
◗ Register now for winter Shabbat family party, Fridays mornings, Jan. 8-March 11. Email anniem@mnjcc.org
◗ Register now for PJ Plus (children 18 mos- 3 years with an adult), Thursdays Jan. 14- March 31, 10 a.m. 905-303-2353, ext. 3258.
◗ Everybody dance with **DJ Layah Jane** - all ages, all bodies welcome. Jan. 17, 2:30 p.m.
◗ **Kevin Courier** discusses "Jewish sensibility in Hollywood films," Mondays starting Jan. 11, 1:30 p.m.
◗ From tummies to mummies: free first class for postnatal spin, Mondays at 10:30 a.m. Ext. 567.
◗ Open community choir, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. with **Gillian Stecyk**. No experience or audition required. Email music@mnjcc.org
◗ Everyday Friends: social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Ext. 330.
◗ Choral workshop for opera lovers with **Alvaro Lozano Gutierrez,** Feb. 24-April 12 at 1 p.m. or Feb. 25- April 14, 7:30 p.m.
◗ *Cause for Celebration*, illustrations by **Yaara Eshet,** is on display at the gallery until Jan.3.
◗ Klezmer ensemble, Tuesdays, ongoing 7:30 p.m. with **Eric Stein.** music@mnjcc.org
◗ Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein.** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. For programs, ext. 3025.
◗ A glass fusion workshop to make a pedestal stand for cakes will be offered Jan. 12 at 7 p.m.
◗ Daytime and evening ceramics courses offered for all abilities. Classes start Jan. 6.
◗ **Suzanne Metz** helps participants with their art projects and teaches new techniques, Wednesdays starting Jan. 6 at 7 p.m.
◗ PJ Plus is a parent/tot program for hands-on Jewish fun. Starts Jan. 10.
◗ Beginner mah-jong Tuesdays, Jan. 12-Feb. 16, 10:30 a.m.
◗ Bridge starts Tuesdays, Jan. 26- March 29, 10 a.m.
◗ Healthy U series: "Are there drug-free options for many of our afflictions?" Jan. 16, 7 p.m. ■

SeeJN | Global Hatikvah event

On Dec. 7, students at Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy took part in the Global Hatikvah Project. Wearing t-shirts that stated "TanenbaumCHAT stands with Israel," the entire student body and faculty on both campuses sang *Hatikvah* along with more than 50 schools, organizations, and even an army troop in Israel in the Israel solidarity event, which was streamed over the Internet.

WRY BREAD

Lights, not sabres

David Levine

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Schwartz and Evan,

I'm writing to bring you up to date on Evan's recent report about Chanukah, *A Light of Hope in the Darkness*. While it was clearly the product of a great deal of effort, it seems that Evan remains confused about the important role Chanukah plays in his heritage – despite the many hours we've dedicated to the holiday in class. I wanted to make you aware of my concerns so that we can work together toward a solution before things get out of hand.

Evan's class spent two weeks learning about Chanukah – we made latkes, played dreidel, lit the chanukiyah, and learned about the history of the holiday: about Judah leading the Maccabees to victory over a powerful enemy and the miracle of the oil that lasted eight days. The students were then asked to write a short report, putting themselves into the Chanukah story as soldiers in Judah Maccabee's army.

We all know that Evan is a creative child – it's part of what makes him such a pleasure to have in class. This report, however, seems to be a garbled product of that creativity, combining his excitement for Chanukah with his excitement for a certain inescapable secular holiday that's just around the corner.

Below are my notes on Evan's report. Please take some time over the holidays to review them together with him:

• The Middle East is not in "a galaxy far, far away."

• The Maccabees *were* a rebel army that used guerrilla tactics to win back their rights from an evil empire – but they did *not* have a "rebel base," or a "fleet."

• The menorah was a holy object, and it would never have been used as a weapon.

• While it is true that Chanukah is the "Festival of Lights," and that the Maccabees used swords in their battles, the term "light sabre" is not a part of the holiday story.

• Jews are not "reform Jedis."

• The Seleucids from the Chanukah story may well have been an evil empire – but the territories they controlled were all on the planet Earth, and real.

• (Most rabbinical sources agree that) the emperor did not have "super powers" of any kind.

• Judah (or Yehudah) the Maccabee *was* a heroic leader of a rebel army – but he was a human being of average size and normal complexion, who spoke with proper syntax and did not disappear into thin air when he died.

• Hoth is not a month on the Hebrew calendar.

• (Most rabbinical sources agree that) Judah did not perform "Jewish mind tricks" in order to defeat Antiochus – who did not "explode" after Judah lit the menorah – which he did *not* do with a flamethrower.

• God's name is not interchangeable with "The Force."

• No Jewish prayers include the word "Chewbacca" (Rabbi Gold was not happy).

I applaud the skill behind Evan's illustrations. He clearly put a lot of time and effort into them. I'm happy to put them up on the bulletin board with the rest of the students' work, but I think everyone involved would be happier if Evan's drawings more closely resembled those of his classmates, and were a shade less blasphemous. Maybe over the holidays you can work on drawings that contain more of the Chanukah stories and games we learned about in class, and fewer images of robots being decapitated in the Holy of Holies.

While Evan's confusion might be understandable, I think it's important that we work quickly to correct it by reinforcing at home the message we've been delivering in school: that this December, millions of people around the world will gather with friends and relatives to celebrate a cultural (and, for many, spiritual) experience greater than themselves, and to retell those tales of bravery and rebellion that still define so much of our culture and so many childhood memories. Could a movie do all that?

Happy Chanukah, and all the best!
Mrs. Gildenblick ■

Follow A. David Levine on twitter at @adavidlevine

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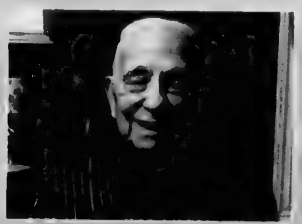
Happy birthday Sarah Frankel celebrating her 102nd birthday on Dec. 22, from her children, Hershie and Hannah, five grandchildren and their spouses, and 13 great-grandchildren.



Bart Potashner recently celebrated his 90th birthday. Mazel tov and many more years of good health. Love from his children and grandchildren

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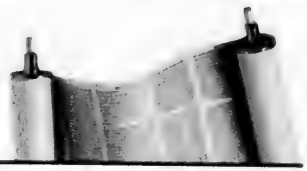
Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Parshah

Vayigash | Genesis 44:18-47:27



Rabbi Aaron Katchen explains Judaism's vision of two messiahs
Rabbi Michal Shekel studies Jacob's struggle for autonomy and identity
Rabbi Howard Morrison reflects on the modern mandate of Jewish education

Aaron Katchen

"Then Judah drew near him [Vayigash]..." (Genesis 44:18).

Judaism speaks of two messiahs (*Mashiach* means "anointed one"). The more common is Mashiach ben David, the one who follows the Davidic line (originating from Judah) and will return the kingship. The lesser known one is Mashiach ben Joseph. Interestingly, Judah is the brother who had sold Joseph into slavery and now reacquaints himself with Joseph in this week's parshah.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first chief rabbi of pre-state Israel, highlights that the selling of Joseph into slavery fractured the two paths of Jacob's family. Rabbi Kook indicates that Judah represents the path of particularity and Joseph represents the path of universality. The brothers' rift splits these two elements in Jacob's lineage.

The brothers' reconciliation began when Judah drew near Joseph (Genesis 44:18). But the unification of these two paths was not complete, an outcome of which we feel until today. By divorcing the universal from the particular, the Jewish experience has tilted to one side or the other. There are many Jews for whom Judaism is a singular experience, and all that matters is within Judaism and the Jewish community. There are also many Jews who forsake Jewish values and instead look to universal values as the guiding expression of their Judaism. These two paths continue to grow further from each other.

The messianic message indicates that we must reconcile and unify these two competing values. We cannot deny our place as global citizens, nor can we ignore the grand message of the Jewish mission in the world. In the end, if we desire messianic peace, we must heed the words of Hillel the Elder (100 BCE), "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?" ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen, who is based in Toronto, directs Ask Big Questions Canada in partnership with Hillel.

Michal Shekel

Where to live as we age is a question we all must face. Perhaps a warmer climate, or closer to the grandchildren. Sometimes the decision is dictated by events, illness or finances. Sometimes the decision is made for us.

In Vayigash, Jacob fearfully sets out on such a journey. It is God who reassures him: "Fear not to go down to Egypt, for I will make you there into a great nation. I Myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I Myself will also bring you back; and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes" (Genesis 46:3-4).

Jacob is a seasoned traveller, but the journey to Egypt is beyond his control: "The sons of Israel put their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to transport him" (Genesis 46:5). In contrast, when his long-lost son comes to greet him, Joseph ordered his chariot and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. (Genesis 46:28) Patriarch he may be, but Jacob is no longer in charge.

Commentators describe Jacob's fear as a concern for his descendants' ability to maintain their identity in Egypt. Additionally, Jacob's fear may have less to do with the unknown future and more about the very clear present and his own identity. How much autonomy is he giving up and how much is being wrested from his grasp?

The struggle for autonomy and identity faced by the patriarch is one we all eventually face both as parents and as children. What provides a measure of comfort to Jacob is "God's promise that Joseph's hand shall close your eyes" (Genesis 46:4). Joseph will still fulfil the teaching of not forsaking his father in old age. Thus, Joseph's anticipated actions reassure Jacob and serve to inspire us. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is the executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis and spiritual leader of Har Tikvah Congregation in Brampton, Ont.

Howard Morrison

After the reconciliation between Joseph and the rest of his family, Jacob advises Judah to go ahead and set up the town of Goshen as a place for the family to reside. "And Judah he [Jacob] sent to point the way to Goshen." Rashi explains that the Hebrew word for "point the way" – *l'horot* – literally means to teach. Thus, Rashi understands that the first priority Judah was sent to fulfil was to establish a place of learning, a Talmud Torah. In other words, as the first Diaspora Jewish family was about to design its communal structure, an institution for religious learning stood as a top priority.

Are our children receiving the highest quality of Jewish education possible? As *The CJN* has reported on numerous occasions, many of the fine institutions of Jewish learning are struggling on many levels. Are we participating with the community at large to revitalize and strengthen the structures for making Jewish education affordable, accessible and meaningful?

As adults, are we showing the way for the next generation by continuing our own Jewish education? Most synagogues as well as other Jewish organizations offer all kinds of learning with a variety of levels and topics.

In our Jewish community today, is Hebrew truly our second language of excellence and comfort? Are there not increasing numbers of Jews who cannot read Hebrew? For those who can read, how many understand Hebrew? For those who can read and translate, how many can participate fluently in a Hebrew conversation?

While contemporary Jews are well versed in a wide array of humanities and sciences, how many are aware and conversant in primary sacred Jewish texts such as the siddur, Tanach, Talmud, Torah commentaries and the like?

In this week's parshah, the first mandate given to the first Diaspora Jewish community is to set up a place for serious Jewish education. Now, four thousand years later, what is our first mandate? ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior rabbi – Mara D'Atra at Beth EmethBais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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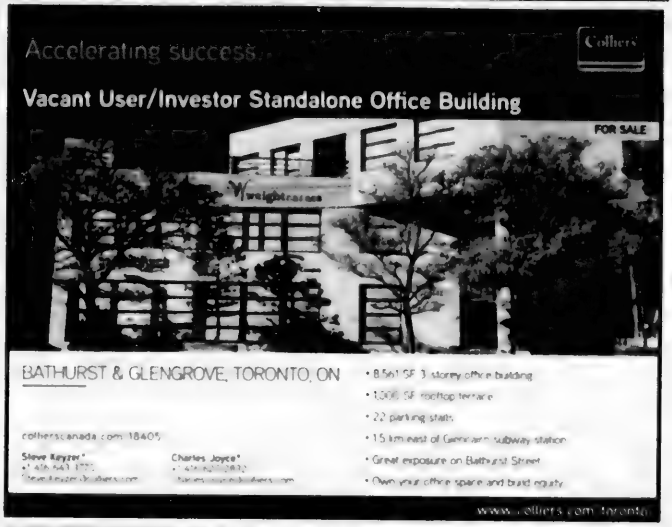

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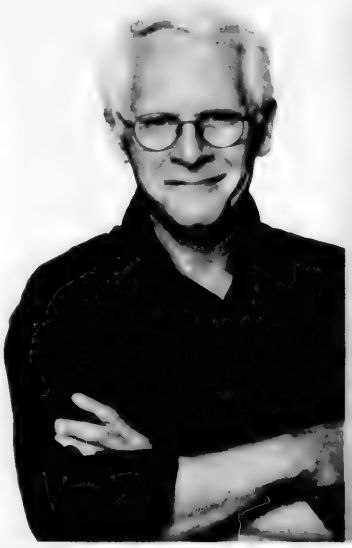
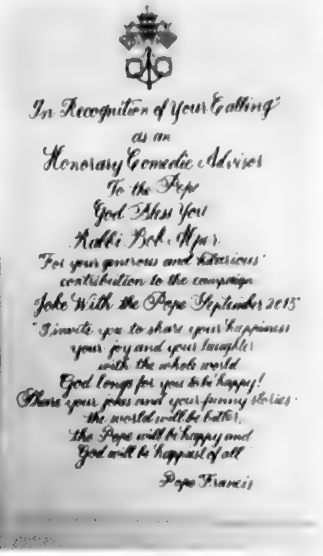
Rabbi Robert Alper: the Pope's comedian

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN



Rabbi Robert "Bob" Alper SULTAN KHAN PHOTO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Pope Francis

Certificate for winning from Pope Francis

This is not a joke: Pope Francis has a new honorary comedic adviser, and he's a rabbi.

Earlier this fall, Vermont Rabbi Robert "Bob" Alper won a contest called Joke With the Pope. Rabbi Alper was one of more than 4,000 people from 47 countries who submitted jokes to the contest, which was designed to promote engagement with the pontiff leading up to his recent visit to the United States.

Along with the unofficial title and a certificate, Rabbi Alper was awarded $10,000 (US) to donate to charity. His choice was House the Homeless in Ethiopia. He was also given two tickets to *The Tonight Show* with Jimmy Fallon.

A native of Providence, R.I., Rabbi Alper was ordained at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1972 and was the first Jew ever to earn a doctorate from the Princeton Theological Seminary. He has served congregations in Buffalo and Philadelphia. In 1986, he entered a Jewish Comic of the Year contest in Philadelphia and came in third. He's been on the comedy circuit ever since and continues to serve as a rabbi.

The winning entry?

"My wife and I have been married for over 46 years, and our lives are totally in sync. For example, at the same time I got a hearing aid, she stopped mumbling."

He spoke to *The CJN* recently by telephone.

What made you enter the contest and why was it so last-minute?
Rosalie Fox.

Your wife?
No, a lady in town I know, a friend. A few weeks ago, she said, "Bob did you hear about this joke-with-a-pope contest? You gotta enter it." I blew her off. I don't enter contests. I've never bought a lottery ticket. I guess about a week and a half later, I ran into her at the farmer's market. She said, "Bob, did you enter the contest?" I said no. She said, "The deadline was three days ago and you gotta do it." I said, "Rosalie, leave me alone," and I bought my bread and tomatoes. Then I went home, my wife was out somewhere, and I was sitting on the back porch. So I took out my cellphone and took a video of myself telling a joke, and I sent it in. A week later, I got an email saying, "Congratulations, you've won."

Has the Pope called to thank you?
He hasn't called, but I have a certificate from him. And the Pope was in on it. He actually wrote to the priest who ran the contest and endorsed it. It has a lovely quote about how he values humour and laughter, which they put on the certificate they gave me.

> *The only Jewish humour I do is poking fun at Jews behaving in silly ways.*

This is the kind of joke the Pope himself could tell.
Yes. They really wanted something that was appropriate. They liked the joke because, first, it was funny. It reflected family. When I say, "My wife and I have been married for 46 years," that's a pretty significant statement. I'm very proud of that and love to share it. Second, they felt it was slightly and humorously self-deprecating. In other words, I wasn't making fun of someone else, not even my wife. I was making fun of me.

And the joke is better because it's true.
It's absolutely true! I got the hearing aid in early June, and in late June, my wife and I went to Cape Cod for a week. On the way down, I was playing with the idea.

To write a joke, it just doesn't come out. You play with it, you tweak it, you write it and cross it out. And then you try it out over and over. I had a show in Cape Cod, so I did the joke and it just killed. So when it came time to send the joke to the Pope – I know millions of jokes – that was the newest and a good one to use.

Have you encountered congregants who say humour from the pulpit is unbecoming?
Never, which is interesting. Maybe they just don't want to insult me. Maybe it's because I'm able to use it appropriately. A good example is, years ago, when I was three or four years into my rabbinate, in Buffalo, I officiated at the funeral of a woman. I told some funny stories about her. I remember saying, "Lilian remained in character until the very end. On the day before she died, her niece came to her and said, 'Aunt Lil, is there anything you'd like?' She said, 'Yes, a comb, some candy, and a stack of 50s.'" And everyone laughed. She was a hard-nosed person and they loved her. But it got a good laugh, a cathartic laugh. It was an appropriate use of humour.

I use the model of the Talmud, of a fellow named Rabbah. He started every lesson with a joke and then the students relaxed and could take in the serious nature of the lesson.

A lot of Jewish comics poke fun at their own Jewishness. Does that make you uncomfortable?
Yeah, because they often cross a line. That's why, for example, I don't do bris jokes. That's an easy target, and it's a sacred ceremony. So the only Jewish humour I do is poking fun at Jews behaving in silly ways.

An example, if you don't mind?
It's not a true story. "When I was in Israel in the late '60s, long before cellphones, I had to make a call from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. I dialed the number and heard a voice say, 'Please deposit eight tokens.' I said, 'Gee, I only have seven.' The voice said, 'all right, I'll take seven.'"

Or, on an incredibly hot day, and an outdoor wedding. Everyone was miserable. The bride looked at me and said, "Rabbi, can you please make it a short ceremony." I said, "Do you both want to be married?" They said yes. I said, "You are."

Are you and Vermont senator and U.S. presidential candidate Bernie Sanders Vermont's Jewish community?
Actually, the biggest event in Vermont is the annual "I-Didn't-Know-You-Were-Jewish Potluck" dinner. I met [Sanders] a couple of times. Watching his stump speech in an elementary school in our town, I thought, "I wish I had a video of him to show the confirmation classes so they would know what a biblical prophet looks and sounds like."

Do you think he could use some humour?
No, and the reason is, he does have some humour. But I think his message is such a strong message of compassion for people, that I think if he resorts to sound bites and stand-up comedy, it would dilute the message I think is so important. I wouldn't tamper with it.

Will you be notified if the Pope ever tells your joke, and do you get royalties?
[Laughs]. I don't think so. I kind of doubt he's going to tell it.

Because it involves a wife?
That would be one reason. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

A shoichet, Yiddish journalist and Jewish philosopher

Backstory

IRA ROBINSON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In the early 20th century, the Jewish community in Montreal created its own religious, cultural and intellectual space, including synagogues, schools, a Jewish public library, and a Yiddish language daily, the *Keneder Adler*. Behind these institutions was a group of remarkable men, both Orthodox and secular, who collectively built a Jewish community of considerable cultural creativity.

One of the most interesting of these men, though hardly the most famous, was Rabbi Chaim Kruger (1875-1934). Kruger, who came to Montreal in 1907, was a shoichet, one of a group of men who insured that Montreal Jews were daily supplied with reliably kosher meat. However this "day job" hardly defined him. Many of his colleagues from the slaughterhouse affiliated with specific congregations as rabbis or cantors, and Rabbi Kruger did serve as a cantor. This also did not define him.

Beside these pursuits, Rabbi Kruger was a Talmud teacher (rosh yeshiva) in the Yeshiva of Montreal (known also as the Hebrew Academy), which was one of the first attempts outside New York City to transplant advanced talmudic learning to North America. The Montreal yeshiva, which did not survive the economic crisis of the 1930s, and of which we know precious little, was affiliated with the United Talmud Torahs and located at 412 Avenue Henri Julien.

However by no means did the slaughterhouse, synagogue, or yeshiva exhaust Rabbi Kruger's energies. He was also a mainstay on the staff of the *Keneder Adler* for decades, and he did many things for that newspaper. It was he who regularly translated world news into Yiddish for the newspaper's front page. He also created a number of features, wrote a regular column entitled "A Mirror of Life" – *A shpigel fun lebn*, and even tried his hand at a serialized novel.

Beyond these pursuits, he was a serious scholar of Jewish history and especially of medieval Jewish philosophy. Rabbi Kruger shared his love of such subjects as the Kabbalists of Safed, Philo Judaeus, Judah Halevi, Saadia Gaon and Maimonides with the readers of the *Keneder Adler* every Friday through much of the 1920s and the early 1930s. His columns on Maimonides were collected into a book *Der Rambam, zayn leben un shafn* (1933), which came out only shortly before he died at the very beginning of 1934.

Kruger's book on Maimonides was taken seriously as scholarship, to the extent that it was reviewed in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, one of the relatively few works in Yiddish to merit notice in the then journal of record of Jewish studies in North America. The book tells us a number of interesting things about Rabbi Kruger. The first is that he had mastered the technicalities of medieval Jewish philosophical concepts. He even attempted to explain these concepts in his newspaper columns, even though his explanations likely went way over the head of the average *Adler* reader.

The second is that Rabbi Kruger's attempt to understand Maimonides' philosophy impelled him to evaluate it in light of modern philosophy. Readers of his columns would have seen him compare and evaluate Maimonides with writings of modern philosophers such as Kant (Rabbi Kruger, like his contemporaries Hermann Cohen and Rabbi Joseph Baer Soloveitchik, found much harmony between the thought of Maimonides and Kant) and Nietzsche.

Whenever I think about Rabbi Kruger, I marvel at one thing in particular that marks an essential difference between his time and ours. In the early 20th century, the scholarly study of Judaism and Jewish history was normally pursued outside the university, in Jewish institutions of various sorts. While in Montreal in Rabbi Kruger's time it was possible to study biblical Hebrew and Semitics at McGill University, there were then severe limitations to McGill's receptivity to the academic pursuit of Jewish studies.

In our time, Rabbi Kruger might well have become a university professor of Judaic studies, but not then. Constrained by the realities of his day, he slaughtered animals for a living, pursued his love of Torah in the Montreal yeshiva, and his love of Jewish studies in the columns of the *Keneder Adler*. ■

Ira Robinson is a professor of religion and chair and director of the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Naster, Shirley	Nov. 20, 2015	7 Townsgate Dr
Brown, Tina Helen	Nov. 20, 2015	185 Strathearn Ave
Morris, Rhoda Phylis	Nov. 21, 2015	Private
Bornstein, Abraham	Nov. 21, 2015	541 Finch Ave W
Rosenthal, Moses Morris	Nov. 22, 2015	62 Carscadden Dr
Kobric, Ronald Leo	Nov. 23, 2015	22 Breckonwood Crs
Segeal, Pauline	Nov. 23, 2015	4266 Bathurst St
Lantsman, Alik	Nov. 23, 2015	Private
Schwartzburg, Oleg	Nov. 24, 2015	125 Leameadow Rd
Hershkovits, Barbara	Nov. 24, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Erez, Felicie	Nov. 24, 2015	60 Disera Dr
Hechtman, Rachel	Nov. 24, 2015	12 Goldfinch Crt
Orzakovski, Gedalia	Nov. 25, 2015	50 Disera Dr
Vinar, Elena	Nov. 25, 2015	10 Krisbury Ave
Amor, Yoram	Nov. 26, 2015	775 Steeles Ave W
Smilovic, Sam	Nov. 27, 2015	866 Sheppard Ave W
Glaser, Sam	Nov. 27, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Wasserman, Norman	Nov. 27, 2015	70 Cass Ave
Ferszt, Abraham	Nov. 28, 2015	98 Tanjoe Cres
Levona, Avner	Nov. 29, 2015	97 Sandringham Dr
Roshanski, Shaya	Nov. 30, 2015	Private
Stal, Albert L.	Dec. 1, 2015	65 Spring Garden Ave
Agasee, Elaine	Dec. 1, 2015	173 Pannahill Rd
Baker, Esther	Dec. 2, 2015	2 Neptune Dr
Khotianov, Elia	Dec. 3, 2015	Private

HEBREW BASIC

Constance (Connie) Rosen	Nov 30/15	608 Castlefield Avenue
Anna Schonblum	Dec 3/15	647 Woburn Avenue

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Shirley Stenzler	Nov 26/15	80 Inverlochy Blvd.
Kay Goldlist	Nov 26/15	95 Thorncliffe Drive
Leonard I. Levy	Nov 25/15	130 Brighton Avenue
Jay Shusterman	Nov 27/15	179 Glenmanor Way
Dan Gerson	Nov 27/15	55 Skymark Drive
Norman Gulko	Nov 28/15	130 Neptune Drivem
Magdalina Markovich	Nov 29/15	3560 Bathurst Street
Dr. Louis London	Nov 28/15	30 Christine Crescent
Eric Shrier	Nov 27/15	810 Scollard Court
Molly Switzer	Nov 29/15	3560 Bathurst Street
Stan Jacobson	Dec 1/15	73 Chiswell Crescent
Lia Woodcock	Dec 1/15	10 Ruddington Drive
Fan Rose	Dec 4/15	240 Harvie Avenue
Semion Krishtul	Dec 4/15	2185 Major MacKenzie Dr
Michelle Pollock (Lee)	Dec 3/15	485 Patricia Avenue
Marty Strom	Dec 3/15	10 Torresdale Avenue
Mina Lenga	Dec 5/15	105 Craig Drive

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Inside

Aboud Dandachi: an "incredible Arab liberal"

Jews help raise funds to sponsor pro-Israel Syrian refugee. **PAGE 12**

Mayim Bialik stands up for Israel

Q&A: *Big Bang Theory* actor opens up about Zionism, female rabbis and more. **PAGE 38**

Vayechi

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:20 p.m.	5:29 p.m.
Montreal	3:57 p.m.	5:07 p.m.
Ottawa	4:06 p.m.	5:16 p.m.
Toronto	4:27 p.m.	5:35 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:13 p.m.	5:29 p.m.
Calgary	4:15 p.m.	5:33 p.m.
Vancouver	4:00 p.m.	5:15 p.m.

THE BEST OF 2015

Comment: Favourite features *from the last* 50 issues PAGE 6

Our most memorable covers *of the past* 12 months PAGE 7

The biggest newsmakers *of* 2015 PAGE 8

Stories that resonated *on* cjnews.com PAGE 8

Jewish Life: The year in arts *and culture* PAGE 27

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Remembering an iconic Jewish hoopster, and Amazon's Nazi items

Legendary NBAer dies

Dolph Schayes, a Jewish basketball player who was voted one of the 50 greatest in NBA history, died Dec. 11 of cancer in Syracuse, N.Y. He was 87. The 12-time all-star was the first NBAer to score 15,000 points and led the Syracuse Nationals to a championship in 1955. In 1966, he was named NBA coach of the year with the Philadelphia 76ers. More than a decade later, he coached the U.S. team at the Maccabiah Games to a gold medal. Schayes was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1973.

B'nai Brith seeks products' removal

B'nai Brith Canada has renewed its efforts to get Amazon to remove hate-related paraphernalia from its U.S. and Canadian websites, which it says violate the online retail giant's own intolerance policy. "B'nai Brith brought this issue to Amazon's attention more than two years ago," B'nai Brith CEO Michael Mostyn said this month. "It is extremely disappointing that Amazon has chosen to selectively self censor their catalogue. While flags and paraphernalia of the Islamic State appear to be banned, there are dozens of items emblazoned with hate iconography including swastikas, Nazi imagery and the logos of banned terror organizations such as a Hezbollah baby outfit 'for Hezbollah lovers.'" When contacted by *CBC News*, Amazon declined to comment on the items.

Adam Sandler is "very pro-Israel."

Sandler likes Stern's rolling of Waters

Adam Sandler criticized ex-Pink Floyd front man Roger Waters and the movement to boycott Israel on *The Howard Stern Show* last week. "I'm disgusted they single out Israel," the Jewish actor said Dec. 15 on Stern's Sirius satellite radio show. "That [they say], 'We can't play Israel.' All these f---ing nice Israeli people are getting a 'f--- you' from Roger Waters. I'm very pro-Israel and when someone says sh-- about Israel, I know people say sh-- about Israel and they f---ing won't play there ... and when you go off on Roger Waters I love that you do that," Sandler said. In October, Stern ripped Waters, a vocal supporter of BDS, in a seven-minute expletive-laden rant after Waters criticized fellow rocker Jon Bon Jovi for performing in Tel Aviv Oct. 3. ■

Gematria

Two-thirds

The proportion of Palestinians who both oppose a two-state solution and support the ongoing wave of stabbings against Israelis, according to a new poll.

$41 Million

The value in U.S. dollars of a 16,000-square-foot Jaffa penthouse that's said to be the most expensive one for sale in Israel.

Quotable

I don't think you should be ashamed to talk about your support for a country where Jews can have an autonomous existence.

— Actor Mayim Bialik on her outspoken support for Israel. See full interview on p. 38.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz looks at how to behave at a shivah house.

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

Welcoming Syrian refugees

How should Canada's Jewish community welcome Syrian refugees (Question of the week, Dec. 10)? With compassion, understanding and respect. Once again, it is our responsibility to demonstrate to the world our foundational belief of tikkun olam.

Rabbi Hillel conveys this message far better than I ever could, "If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I? And if not now, when?"

Estella Cohen
Toronto

As the child of immigrants from Poland and Russia I am grateful to the various Canadian governments in welcoming and integrating refugees and other newcomers to Canada.

I have one serious reservation with respect to the newly arrived and soon to arrive Syrian refugees. Since 1948, Syria and Israel have been in a state of war. The Jewish population has either fled from Syria or was driven out without compensation for their property. For all the years since the creation of the State of Israel, Syrians have been taught to hate Israel and Jews. I wonder to what extent the Syrians now arriving in Canada have been vetted with respect to any anti-Semitic feelings.

Obviously, as a matter of self-preservation, they would not admit to that, but it is a concern that they bring such attitudes to Canada. Am I naive to believe that if they harbour such feelings towards Jews that by simply settling in Canada their feeling towards Jews will change?

Bert Raphael, president, the Jewish Civil Rights Association
Toronto

The cost of progressives

Mira Sucharov wants rabbis to denounce far-right Zionism (*The CJN*, Nov. 26). She gives as an example the policy to retain all of Judea and Samaria on the part of the Jewish Home party.

I, too, disagree with this policy as outlined by leader Naftali Bennett, but this is politics, and I don't think that rabbis should go there, unless there are serious moral issues, for example, recommending expulsion of Arabs from their land.

She refers to left wingers as "progressives." This is not uncommon, but, in my view, it's a rather odious term implying all those who disagree are "regressives." In fact, the label progressive was often adopted by Communists during the McCarthy era, since their old name had such bad connotations.

Now that we understand that left wingers are just those with another point of view, if indeed rabbis were to denounce far-right Zionism, then I would have them denounce far-left Zionism too. By that I mean those "Zionists" who support the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement to convince Israel to leave Arab territories or who denounce Israel every time, in reacting to the unprovoked rocket attacks from Gaza, it kills some of the civilians that Hamas routinely uses as shields.

How that could be "progressive" Zionism escapes me completely.

Ken Frankel
Montreal

The real enemy Israel faces

In the letter to the editor "We refuse to be enemies," (*The CJN*, Nov. 26), the letter writers do this noble and important idea a disservice through obfuscation, equivocation and inaccuracy.

Just one example is their regrettable assertion that radical Islamist terror stems from regional conflicts, including in "Palestine," a country that does not and never has existed.

This is not only a swipe at Israel, but a fundamental mis-characterization of Islamist ideology and motivation.

Islamists, which are really who Israel is fighting with the Palestinian Authority, PLO and Hamas, are not like the Irish Republican Army, a terror group that, though ruthless and murderous, had a limited geographic goal.

Anyone with any common sense and understanding of Islamism and jihad knows that if Israel and all its Jews were to be gone tomorrow, there would still be an ISIS, an Al Qaeda, an Iran, or another Islamist group working even harder than they are now to violently establish a caliphate over the rest of the globe.

Brotherhood (and sisterhood) between peoples is something we all need to work for, but it is only sustainable to the degree that truth is mutually embraced.

Steve Mitchell
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Email **cjninfo@gmail.com**
We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number

TO OUR VALUED SUBSCRIBERS

Note: there will be no paper printed on December 31.

WE WILL RESUME PRINTING ON JANUARY 7, 2016.

Thank you for your continued loyalty to The CJN.

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When my husband died suddenly, my whole world stopped. I didn't even know where to begin with the arrangements. It was 2am. I called Benjamin's. To my surprise, Michael Benjamin himself answered the phone. They took care of every imaginable detail. They even had umbrellas for guests when it rained at the gravesite. I will never forget their wonderful care.

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RABBI-2-RABBI

Travel can be a sacred mission

Like Judaism, it lets us explore the unfamiliar, thereby opening ourselves to parts of our inner landscape we've never known before

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Splansky: Many Jewish travellers make a point to seek out synagogues when they are far from home, even if they are not "regular shul-goers." Why do we do this?

There is nothing more affirming than to walk in a strange city, where people speak a foreign language, and enter an unknown space, only to be greeted as family. Such a welcome affirms that we are, despite how we often treat one another, *am echad*, one people.

Rabbi Fishman: We may find ourselves miles from home, but we still experience the familiar – and that goes to show just how connected we are. I recall travelling to Florence, Italy, and participating in a Friday night service. The tune that was sung to *Lecha Dodi* was the same as my synagogue.

And yet, travel also allows us to explore the unfamiliar, and thereby open ourselves up to aspects of our inner landscape that we have never known before. I believe this is one of the fundamental themes in our religion, and why Abraham and Sarah were known as travellers. The sense of constant exploration, openness to new possibilities and the vulnerability that comes from being an outsider are all part of the complex spiritual DNA of Jewishness.

Rabbi Splansky: A childhood friend served in rural Chile with the Peace Corps. In anticipation of Yom Kippur, she researched the seven-hour bus ride she'd need to take to reach the synagogue in Santiago. When she finally arrived, security was so tight they would not let her in. What could she do but sit down on the front steps and cry?

It wasn't long before the rebbetzin came out and said: "Someone told me there's an American girl crying on my steps. We can't have that here. Come inside."

Rabbi Fishman: "I am a stranger and a resident." These were Abraham's words to the residents of Canaan, and they continue to resonate today.

We are not from here. We are visitors. We are just passing through. And yet, simultaneously, we belong. This, too, is home. We too have our roots and our future right here.

The Jewish way is to be both a stranger and still feel at home. To somehow always see ourselves as on the move and not really settled and satisfied with the status quo, and yet, at the same time, to build, to plant wherever we may find ourselves at any given moment.

The prophet Jeremiah tells the exiles after they have been expelled from their land: "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." We cherish our particularism, but never forget that we, too, have a responsibility to better the situation of the cities we travel and settle down in.

Rabbi Splansky: Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav famously said: "Wherever I go, I go to Jerusalem." I don't know exactly what he meant. Is it that every trip should be pursued as a sacred mission? That it's not the destination that matters, but the journey?

I write these words from Barcelona. I came for the art and architecture, the good food and wine. We will take a day trip to the medieval Jewish city of Gerona and find the Reform congregation for Shabbat.

But I've also come with my husband in celebration of our 20th wedding anniversary. The long walks through winding streets and slow conversations over coffee may be what I really came for.

Wherever people travel this winter, may they go in peace and return fulfilled.

Rabbi Fishman: Sounds wonderful. Walking through the streets of Jerusalem (and perhaps Barcelona) can have a magical effect on even the most hardened of people. Jerusalem is a city of mystery, of complexity and of the enchanting sense that greatness can be achieved when we work together.

That is how I understand Rabbi Nachman's statement – that all our experiences, our cultural familiarities and our collective wisdom can be channelled into a beautiful whole. Everything we do, each act we complete, each new alleyway we explore, can join together to become "a complete city," where immigrant and native can truly feel at home. ■

How to reach us

Vol. XLV, No. 50 (2,226)*

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Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation: July 14, 2015

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Postmaster: Please return 29Bs and changes of address to CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7.
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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From the Archives | Benevolent people

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

Seen are Canadian Hebrew Benevolent Society past presidents and officers in 1939. The Canadian Hebrew Benevolent Society was founded in 1913 to provide aid to members of the Jewish community.

SeeJN | Bar mitzvah

YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90

Naor Shalev, 13, carries a Torah scroll as he celebrates his bar mitzvah with family and friends at the Western Wall, Dec. 17. Naor was critically injured in a stabbing attack in Pisgat Ze'ev in Jerusalem over two months ago.

From Yoni's Desk

My favourite cover stories, part 2

Last week, I listed six of my favourite *CJN* cover stories from the first six months of 2015. Here are six more from the second half of the year. You can revisit these stories right now at cjnews.com.

1. The isolation of infertility, July 23: Most of us know someone who has experienced fertility challenges. It's a difficult topic to discuss, and one that needs to be approached with the utmost sensitivity. That was our aim when we explored the physical, mental, social and cultural stresses of infertility. Alongside Sheri Shefa's reporting, we published two essays from people who have experienced fertility challenges personally.

2. Is there anybody out there? Aug. 6: With more and more Jews identifying as atheist or agnostic, Jodie Shupac explored the growing trend of religious observance without accompanying faith in God. Meanwhile, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner and Mark Brender debated whether Judaism requires faith in God, with the former arguing that the search for God is the core of Jewish history, and the latter countering that being an atheist hasn't stopped him from adopting Jewish values.

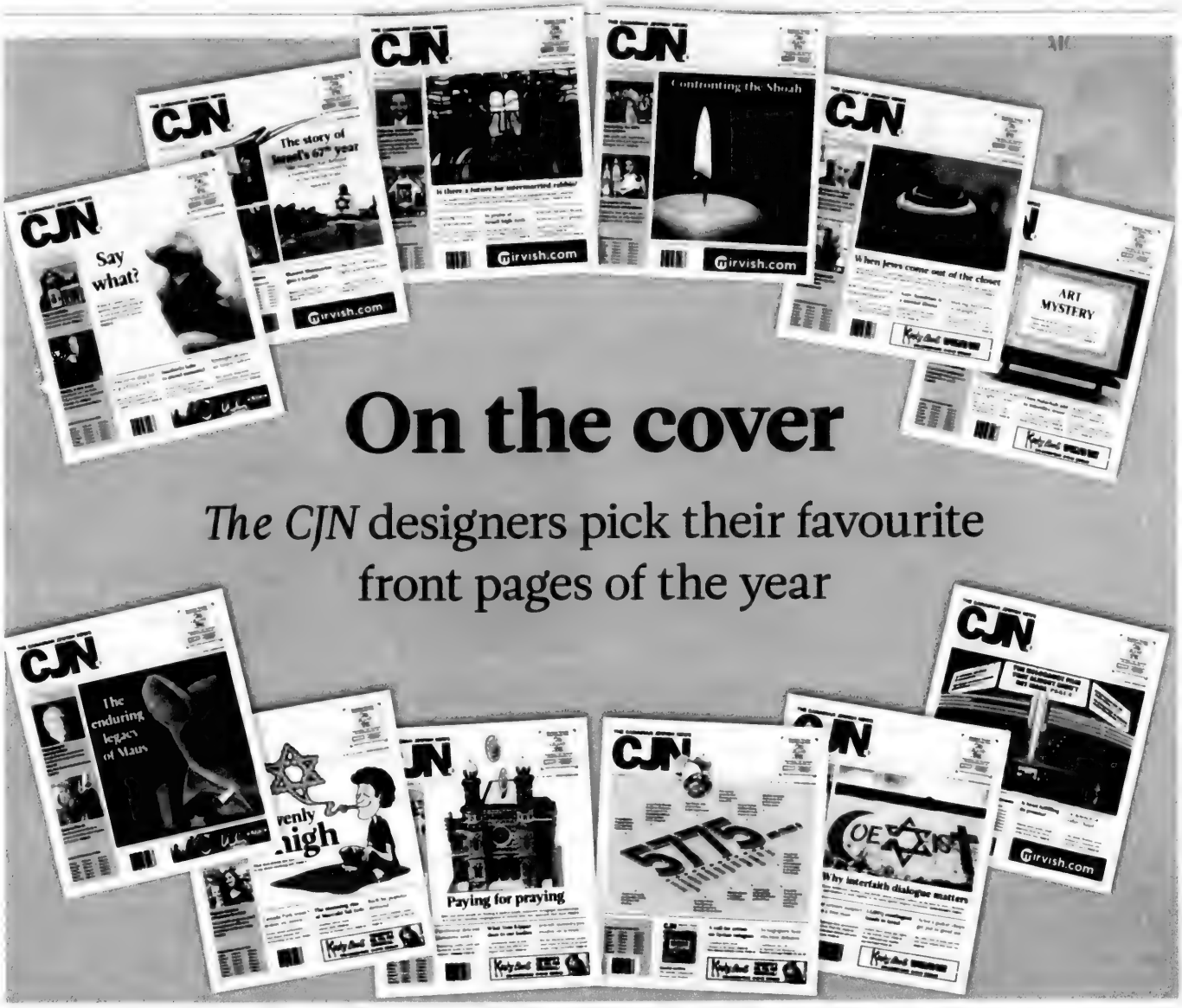
3. Paying for praying, Sept. 17: As an increasing number of shul-goers appear unwilling, or unable, to pay dues, Lila Sarick wondered whether the traditional pay-to-pray financial model is sustainable. "It's difficult to find [money for dues] in your household budget, and joining a synagogue isn't a given anymore," Cindy Joseph, chair of the membership committee at Toronto's Beth Radom Congregation, admitted. And that has led many synagogues to search for alternative income sources.

4. In their own words, Oct. 15: Less than a week before the federal election, *The CJN* published interviews with Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau, Conservative Leader Stephen Harper and NDP Leader Tom Mulcair. (We interviewed Green party head Elizabeth May a few weeks earlier.) Securing one-on-one talks with the main prime ministerial candidates was a first for this publication, and it gave our readers an opportunity to hear first-hand what the leaders had to say on a number of important issues for the Jewish community.

5. Orthodoxy and female rabbis, Nov. 26: Native Ottawan Lila Kagedan is the first Orthodox woman to adopt the title "rabbi." In the wake of a resolution issued by the Rabbinical Council of America rejecting female ordination, Rabbi Kagedan explained why she chose to take that moniker and argued that women's ordination in Orthodoxy is alive and well. "We have a long way to go," she wrote, "but I am optimistic."

6. Alberta's Jews feel the pinch, Dec. 3: With the price of oil declining, Paul Lungen investigated how Albertan Jews were being affected. As he discovered, the economic slump has led to an uptick in economic stress within the Jewish communities of Calgary and Edmonton, where many wonder whether the worst is yet to come. But not everyone was feeling so pessimistic: "It's a cyclical economy. Up and down," Calgary lawyer Gordon Hoffman told Lungen. "This is the engine of the country. We'll be busy again," he said.

As we sign off for 2015, I want to thank you for your readership and support this year. We're looking forward to bringing you a host of compelling, thoughtful and original stories in 2016. — YONI



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Looking back at 2015

Terrorism, Trudeau and a young man named Tyler made waves

DANIEL WOLGELERENTER
dwolgel@thecjn.ca

Not surprisingly, 2015 was an eventful year in the Jewish world, one marked by violence, anti-Semitism, political rancour, and debates about Jewish identity.

As it began, Canadians and Canadian Jews rallied in solidarity with France after two Islamic gunmen stormed the offices of satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, killing 11, including a Jewish cartoonist and a Jewish columnist, and two days later, four Jewish men were killed by an Islamic gunman in a siege at a kosher supermarket in Paris.

Rabbi Adam Scheier, spiritual leader of Montreal's Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, visited Paris and said Canada must do more to help French Jews immigrate here.

An Islamic threat of a different sort hung over Jewish politics as U.S.-led talks to limit Iran's nuclear program – a deal was reached in July – became one of the issues dividing Jews in the recent Canadian election campaign.

The deal loomed large when, in an unprecedented move, the Jewish Defence League picketed the home of Toronto Jewish businessman Barry Sherman when he hosted a fundraiser for Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau. The JDL claimed key Trudeau advisers were critical of Israel, backed the Iran deal and favoured engagement with the Islamic Republic. (One adviser, new Mississauga Centre MP Omar Alghabra, recently was named parliamentary secretary to the minister of foreign affairs, responsible for consular affairs, causing his statements on the Middle East and his past as head of the Canadian Arab Federation to come under greater scrutiny.)

The campaign also marked the retirement of MP Irwin Cotler in Mount Royal, which saw a hard-fought race to replace him. Anthony Housefather ultimately retained the riding for the Liberals, joining six other new Jewish Liberal MPs.

In Toronto, Canada's first Jewish finance minister, Tory Joe Oliver, was defeated in the Liberal sweep, as was York Centre MP Mark Adler, but not before Adler faced controversy for erroneously claiming to be the first child of a Holocaust survivor ever elected to Parliament and mentioning it in campaign materials.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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Our most popular stories on the web

DANIEL KOREN
dkoren@thecjn.ca

While the Internet is normally a fickle beast, it was almost predictable that many of the stories to go viral in 2015 were preceded by events that rocked the local or international community, including the tragedies that unfolded in Paris, the ongoing terror attacks against civilians in Israel, and the Canadian federal election.

CJN readers took to social media and the comment section of our recently relaunched website to debate important issues or to comment on stories we reported throughout the year.

The most meaningful and impactful articles published in 2015 are also some of *The CJN's* most-read stories of the year. They are listed below, in no particular order.

For the full versions, search for these headlines at www.cjnews.com.

Peterborough shul helps mosque

Barely 24 hours after the attacks in Paris that left at least 130 dead, arsonists targeted Peterborough's only mosque, prompting the local Beth Israel synagogue to offer its support. The move was shared by thousands on social media, with many *CJN* readers commending the shul for "building bridges instead of walls." Muslim worshippers were thankful to have been given a space to pray, and the two communities even held a dinner party together. "We may be different religions, but we're all one people, and in times like this, we have to stick together," Beth Israel president Larry Gilman told *The CJN*.

What can Jews expect from Trudeau?

Immediately following Justin Trudeau's election win, *The CJN* spoke to a slew of local leaders, analyzing comments made during the campaign. Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) CEO Shimon Fogel said Trudeau has been clear that his government's policies "will entirely reflect the positions staked out by the previous government."

Shwarma war is no laffa-ing matter

Traditional Middle Eastern fare like falafel and shwarma has long been a staple in Jewish Toronto.

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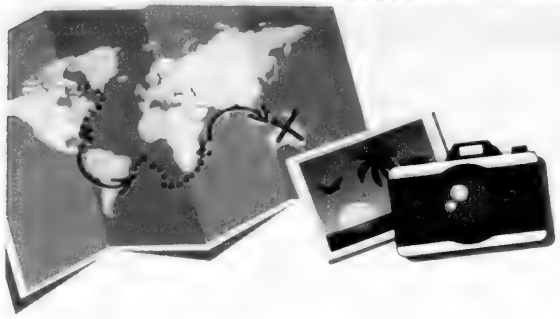

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Inside

Aboud Dandachi: an "incredible Arab liberal"

Jews help raise funds to sponsor pro-Israel Syrian refugee. **PAGE 12**

Mayim Bialik stands up for Israel

Q&A: *Big Bang Theory* actor opens up about Zionism, female rabbis and more. **PAGE 38**

Weekly

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:20 p.m.	5:29 p.m.
Montreal	3:57 p.m.	5:07 p.m.
Ottawa	4:06 p.m.	5:16 p.m.
Toronto	4:27 p.m.	5:35 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:13 p.m.	5:29 p.m.
Calgary	4:15 p.m.	5:33 p.m.
Vancouver	4:00 p.m.	5:15 p.m.

THE BEST OF 2015

Comment: Favourite features *from the last* 50 issues PAGE 6

Our most memorable covers *of the past* 12 months PAGE 7

The biggest newsmakers *of* 2015 PAGE 8

Stories that resonated *on* cjnews.com PAGE 8

Jewish Life: The year in arts *and culture* PAGE 27

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Remembering an iconic Jewish hoopster, and Amazon's Nazi items

Legendary NBAer dies

Dolph Schayes, a Jewish basketball player who was voted one of the 50 greatest in NBA history, died Dec. 11 of cancer in Syracuse, N.Y. He was 87. The 12-time all-star was the first NBAer to score 15,000 points and led the Syracuse Nationals to a championship in 1955. In 1966, he was named NBA coach of the year with the Philadelphia 76ers. More than a decade later, he coached the U.S. team at the Maccabiah Games to a gold medal. Schayes was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1973.

B'nai Brith seeks products' removal

B'nai Brith Canada has renewed its efforts to get Amazon to remove hate-related paraphernalia from its U.S. and Canadian websites, which it says violate the online retail giant's own intolerance policy. "B'nai Brith brought this issue to Amazon's attention more than two years ago," B'nai Brith CEO Michael Mostyn said this month. "It is extremely disappointing that Amazon has chosen to selectively self censor their catalogue. While flags and paraphernalia of the Islamic State appear to be banned, there are dozens of items emblazoned with hate iconography including swastikas, Nazi imagery and the logos of banned terror organizations such as a Hezbollah baby outfit 'for Hezbollah lovers.'" When contacted by *CBC News*, Amazon declined to comment on the items.

Adam Sandler is "very pro-Israel."

Sandler likes Stern's roiling of Waters

Adam Sandler criticized ex-Pink Floyd front man Roger Waters and the movement to boycott Israel on *The Howard Stern Show* last week. "I'm disgusted they single out Israel," the Jewish actor said Dec. 15 on Stern's Sirius satellite radio show. "That [they say], 'We can't play Israel.' All these f---ing nice Israeli people are getting a 'f--- you' from Roger Waters. I'm very pro-Israel and when someone says sh-- about Israel, I know people say sh-- about Israel and they f---ing won't play there ... and when you go off on Roger Waters I love that you do that," Sandler said. In October, Stern ripped Waters, a vocal supporter of BDS, in a seven-minute expletive-laden rant after Waters criticized fellow rocker Jon Bon Jovi for performing in Tel Aviv Oct. 3. ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

Two-thirds

The proportion of Palestinians who both oppose a two-state solution and support the ongoing wave of stabbings against Israelis, according to a new poll.

$41 Million

The value in U.S. dollars of a 16,000-square-foot Jaffa penthouse that's said to be the most expensive one for sale in Israel.

Quotable

I don't think you should be ashamed to talk about your support for a country where Jews can have an autonomous existence.

— Actor Mayim Bialik on her outspoken support for Israel. See full interview on p. 38.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz looks at how to behave at a shivah house.

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Letters to the Editor

Welcoming Syrian refugees

How should Canada's Jewish community welcome Syrian refugees (Question of the week, Dec. 10)? With compassion, understanding and respect. Once again, it is our responsibility to demonstrate to the world our foundational belief of tikkun olam.

Rabbi Hillel conveys this message far better than I ever could, "If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I? And if not now, when?"

Estella Cohen
Toronto

As the child of immigrants from Poland and Russia I am grateful to the various Canadian governments in welcoming and integrating refugees and other newcomers to Canada.

I have one serious reservation with respect to the newly arrived and soon to arrive Syrian refugees. Since 1948, Syria and Israel have been in a state of war. The Jewish population has either fled from Syria or was driven out without compensation for their property. For all the years since the creation of the State of Israel, Syrians have been taught to hate Israel and Jews. I wonder to what extent the Syrians now arriving in Canada have been vetted with respect to any anti-Semitic feelings.

Obviously, as a matter of self-preservation, they would not admit to that, but it is a concern that they bring such attitudes to Canada. Am I naive to believe that if they harbour such feelings towards Jews that by simply settling in Canada their feeling towards Jews will change?

Bert Raphael, president, the Jewish Civil Rights Association
Toronto

The cost of progressives

Mira Sucharov wants rabbis to denounce far-right Zionism (*The CJN*, Nov. 26). She gives as an example the policy to retain all of Judea and Samaria on the part of the Jewish Home party.

I, too, disagree with this policy as outlined by leader Naftali Bennett, but this is politics, and I don't think that rabbis should go there, unless there are serious moral issues, for example, recommending expulsion of Arabs from their land.

She refers to left wingers as "progressives." This is not uncommon, but, in my view, it's a rather odious term implying all those who disagree are "regressives." In fact, the label progressive was often adopted by Communists during the McCarthy era, since their old name had such bad connotations.

Now that we understand that left wingers are just those with another point of view, if indeed rabbis were to denounce far-right Zionism, then I would have them denounce far-left Zionism too. By that I mean those "Zionists" who support the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement to convince Israel to leave Arab territories or who denounce Israel every time, in reacting to the unprovoked rocket attacks from Gaza, it kills some of the civilians that Hamas routinely uses as shields.

How that could be "progressive" Zionism escapes me completely.

Ken Frankel
Montreal

The real enemy Israel faces

In the letter to the editor "We refuse to be enemies," (*The CJN*, Nov. 26), the letter writers do this noble and important idea a disservice through obfuscation, equivocation and inaccuracy.

Just one example is their regrettable assertion that radical Islamist terror stems from regional conflicts, including in "Palestine," a country that does not and never has existed.

This is not only a swipe at Israel, but a fundamental mis-characterization of Islamist ideology and motivation.

Islamists, which are really who Israel is fighting with the Palestinian Authority, PLO and Hamas, are not like the Irish Republican Army, a terror group that, though ruthless and murderous, had a limited geographic goal.

Anyone with any common sense and understanding of Islamism and jihad knows that if Israel and all its Jews were to be gone tomorrow, there would still be an ISIS, an Al Qaeda, an Iran, or another Islamist group working even harder than they are now to violently establish a caliphate over the rest of the globe.

Brotherhood (and sisterhood) between peoples is something we all need to work for, but it is only sustainable to the degree that truth is mutually embraced.

Steve Mitchell
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Email **cjninfo@gmail.com**
We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.

TO OUR VALUED SUBSCRIBERS

Note: there will be no paper printed on December 31.

WE WILL RESUME PRINTING ON JANUARY 7, 2016.

Thank you for your continued loyalty to The CJN.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN

RABBI·2·RABBI

Travel can be a sacred mission

Like Judaism, it lets us explore the unfamiliar, thereby opening ourselves to parts of our inner landscape we've never known before

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Splansky: Many Jewish travellers make a point to seek out synagogues when they are far from home, even if they are not "regular shul-goers." Why do we do this?

There is nothing more affirming than to walk in a strange city, where people speak a foreign language, and enter an unknown space, only to be greeted as family. Such a welcome affirms that we are, despite how we often treat one another, *am echad*, one people.

Rabbi Fishman: We may find ourselves miles from home, but we still experience the familiar – and that goes to show just how connected we are. I recall travelling to Florence, Italy, and participating in a Friday night service. The tune that was sung to *Lecha Dodi* was the same as my synagogue.

And yet, travel also allows us to explore the unfamiliar, and thereby open ourselves up to aspects of our inner landscape that we have never known before. I believe this is one of the fundamental themes in our religion, and why Abraham and Sarah were known as travellers. The sense of constant exploration, openness to new possibilities and the vulnerability that comes from being an outsider are all part of the complex spiritual DNA of Jewishness.

Rabbi Splansky: A childhood friend served in rural Chile with the Peace Corps. In anticipation of Yom Kippur, she researched the seven-hour bus ride she'd need to take to reach the synagogue in Santiago. When she finally arrived, security was so tight they would not let her in. What could she do but sit down on the front steps and cry?

It wasn't long before the rebbetzin came out and said: "Someone told me there's an American girl crying on my steps. We can't have that here. Come inside."

Rabbi Fishman: "I am a stranger and a resident." These were Abraham's words to the residents of Canaan, and they continue to resonate today.

We are not from here. We are visitors. We are just passing through. And yet, simultaneously, we belong. This, too, is home. We too have our roots and our future right here.

The Jewish way is to be both a stranger and still feel at home. To somehow always see ourselves as on the move and not really settled and satisfied with the status quo, and yet, at the same time, to build, to plant wherever we may find ourselves at any given moment.

The prophet Jeremiah tells the exiles after they have been expelled from their land: "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." We cherish our particularism, but never forget that we, too, have a responsibility to better the situation of the cities we travel and settle down in.

Rabbi Splansky: Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav famously said: "Wherever I go, I go to Jerusalem." I don't know exactly what he meant. Is it that every trip should be pursued as a sacred mission? That it's not the destination that matters, but the journey?

I write these words from Barcelona. I came for the art and architecture, the good food and wine. We will take a day trip to the medieval Jewish city of Gerona and find the Reform congregation for Shabbat.

But I've also come with my husband in celebration of our 20th wedding anniversary. The long walks through winding streets and slow conversations over coffee may be what I really came for.

Wherever people travel this winter, may they go in peace and return fulfilled. ■

Rabbi Fishman: Sounds wonderful. Walking through the streets of Jerusalem (and perhaps Barcelona) can have a magical effect on even the most hardened of people. Jerusalem is a city of mystery, of complexity and of the enchanting sense that greatness can be achieved when we work together.

That is how I understand Rabbi Nachman's statement – that all our experiences, our cultural familiarities and our collective wisdom can be channelled into a beautiful whole. Everything we do, each act we complete, each new alleyway we explore, can join together to become "a complete city," where immigrant and native can truly feel at home. ■

When my husband died suddenly, my whole world stopped. I didn't even know where to begin with the arrangements. It was 2am. I called Benjamin's. To my surprise, Michael Benjamin himself answered the phone. They took care of every imaginable detail. They even had umbrellas for guests when it rained at the gravesite. I will never forget their wonderful care.

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Editorial e-mail: cjninfo@gmail.com
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Sales, National & Toronto Local: Canadian Primedia, 416-922-3605

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Circulation:
Total circulation: 31,245 copies
Total paid circulation: 23,634 copies
CCNA verified circulation:
July 14, 2015

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Postmaster: Please return 29Bs and changes of address to CJN, 1750 Steeles Ave. W., Ste. 218, Concord, Ont. L4K 2L7.
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From the Archives | Benevolent people

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

Seen are Canadian Hebrew Benevolent Society past presidents and officers in 1939. The Canadian Hebrew Benevolent Society was founded in 1913 to provide aid to members of the Jewish community.

SeeJN | Bar mitzvah

YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90

Naor Shalev, 13, carries a Torah scroll as he celebrates his bar mitzvah with family and friends at the Western Wall, Dec. 17. Naor was critically injured in a stabbing attack in Pisgat Ze'ev in Jerusalem over two months ago.

From Yoni's Desk

My favourite cover stories, part 2

Last week, I listed six of my favourite *CJN* cover stories from the first six months of 2015. Here are six more from the second half of the year. You can revisit these stories right now at cjnews.com.

1. The isolation of infertility, July 23: Most of us know someone who has experienced fertility challenges. It's a difficult topic to discuss, and one that needs to be approached with the utmost sensitivity. That was our aim when we explored the physical, mental, social and cultural stresses of infertility. Alongside Sheri Shefa's reporting, we published two essays from people who have experienced fertility challenges personally.

2. Is there anybody out there? Aug. 6: With more and more Jews identifying as atheist or agnostic, Jodie Shupac explored the growing trend of religious observance without accompanying faith in God. Meanwhile, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner and Mark Brender debated whether Judaism requires faith in God, with the former arguing that the search for God is the core of Jewish history, and the latter countering that being an atheist hasn't stopped him from adopting Jewish values.

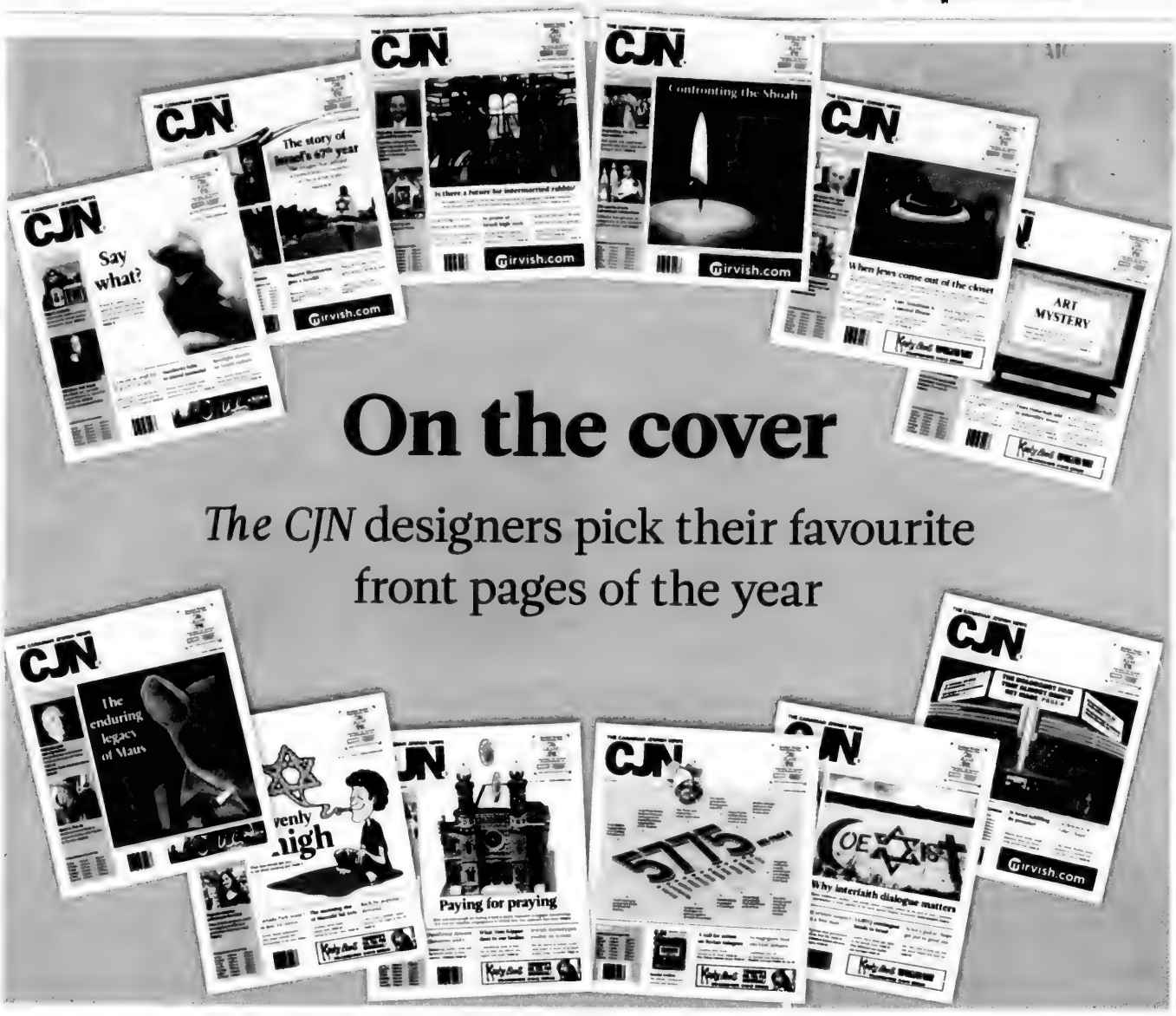
3. Paying for praying, Sept. 17: As an increasing number of shul-goers appear unwilling, or unable, to pay dues, Lila Sarick wondered whether the traditional pay-to-pray financial model is sustainable. "It's difficult to find [money for dues] in your household budget, and joining a synagogue isn't a given anymore," Cindy Joseph, chair of the membership committee at Toronto's Beth Radom Congregation, admitted. And that has led many synagogues to search for alternative income sources.

4. In their own words, Oct. 15: Less than a week before the federal election, *The CJN* published interviews with Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau, Conservative Leader Stephen Harper and NDP Leader Tom Mulcair. (We interviewed Green party head Elizabeth May a few weeks earlier.) Securing one-on-one talks with the main prime ministerial candidates was a first for this publication, and it gave our readers an opportunity to hear first-hand what the leaders had to say on a number of important issues for the Jewish community.

5. Orthodoxy and female rabbis, Nov. 26: Native Ottawan Lila Kagedan is the first Orthodox woman to adopt the title "rabbi." In the wake of a resolution issued by the Rabbinical Council of America rejecting female ordination, Rabbi Kagedan explained why she chose to take that moniker and argued that women's ordination in Orthodoxy is alive and well. "We have a long way to go," she wrote, "but I am optimistic."

6. Alberta's Jews feel the pinch, Dec. 3: With the price of oil declining, Paul Lungen investigated how Albertan Jews were being affected. As he discovered, the economic slump has led to an uptick in economic stress within the Jewish communities of Calgary and Edmonton, where many wonder whether the worst is yet to come. But not everyone was feeling so pessimistic: "It's a cyclical economy. Up and down," Calgary lawyer Gordon Hoffman told Lungen. "This is the engine of the country. We'll be busy again," he said.

As we sign off for 2015, I want to thank you for your readership and support this year. We're looking forward to bringing you a host of compelling, thoughtful and original stories in 2016. — YONI



On the cover

The CJN designers pick their favourite front pages of the year

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Looking back at 2015

Terrorism, Trudeau and a young man named Tyler made waves

DANIEL WOLGELERENTER
dwolgel@thecjn.ca

Not surprisingly, 2015 was an eventful year in the Jewish world, one marked by violence, anti-Semitism, political rancour, and debates about Jewish identity.

As it began, Canadians and Canadian Jews rallied in solidarity with France after two Islamic gunmen stormed the offices of satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, killing 11, including a Jewish cartoonist and a Jewish columnist, and two days later, four Jewish men were killed by an Islamic gunman in a siege at a kosher supermarket in Paris.

Rabbi Adam Scheier, spiritual leader of Montreal's Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, visited Paris and said Canada must do more to help French Jews immigrate here.

An Islamic threat of a different sort hung over Jewish politics as U.S.-led talks to limit Iran's nuclear program – a deal was reached in July – became one of the issues dividing Jews in the recent Canadian election campaign.

The deal loomed large when, in an unprecedented move, the Jewish Defence League picketed the home of Toronto Jewish businessman Barry Sherman when he hosted a fundraiser for Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau. The JDL claimed key Trudeau advisers were critical of Israel, backed the Iran deal and favoured engagement with the Islamic Republic. (One adviser, new Mississauga Centre MP Omar Alghabra, recently was named parliamentary secretary to the minister of foreign affairs, responsible for consular affairs, causing his statements on the Middle East and his past as head of the Canadian Arab Federation to come under greater scrutiny.)

The campaign also marked the retirement of MP Irwin Cotler in Mount Royal, which saw a hard-fought race to replace him. Anthony Housefather ultimately retained the riding for the Liberals, joining six other new Jewish Liberal MPs.

In Toronto, Canada's first Jewish finance minister, Tory Joe Oliver, was defeated in the Liberal sweep, as was York Centre MP Mark Adler, but not before Adler faced controversy for erroneously claiming to be the first child of a Holocaust survivor ever elected to Parliament and mentioning it in campaign materials.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Our most popular stories on the web

DANIEL KOREN
dkoren@thecjn.ca

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Traditional Middle Eastern fare like falafel and shwarma has long been a staple in Jewish Toronto.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Democracy means individuals can choose

Mira Sucharov

The sublime thing about liberal democracies is that they are based on the rights and responsibilities of individuals rather than groups. Unlike the kind of sectarian societies imploding in civil war in the Middle East, in a liberal democracy, it is the individual who chooses to go to the ballot box (or abdicate) or to attend a protest (or go to the movies), and it is the individual who must abide by the law or face punishment.

In robust multicultural societies like Canada's, individuals are given another opportunity – to identify as an ethnic, religious or cultural group. And those groups are considered a boon to the fabric of society. But ultimately, all rights and responsibilities rest solely with the person.

Which is why the recent call for Muslims in Canada and the United States to publicly denounce acts of terrorism committed by the Islamic State (ISIS) and others inspired by them, is understandable – but ultimately wrong.

Here's where it's understandable. Terrorism – defined as the targeting of civilians for political ends – is morally distasteful. When committed by a fellow citizen, the action is especially corrosive, leading to distrust and paranoia. When an act of terrorism is committed by a person or group claiming to act on behalf of a particular religion, it's tempting to want everyone else from that religion to denounce the action.

But here's where it's wrong. As a Jew, I regularly urge my fellow Jews to stand up for injustice as Jews, to stand up against an array of Israeli policies that I find objectionable. I encouraged my JCC (where I was then a board member) to undertake staff training around LGBTQ awareness, thus enabling it to declare itself an "LGBTQ safe zone," as facilitated by the Jewish LGBTQ organization, Keshet. As a Jew, and as a Jewish columnist in the Jewish press, I stand up for religious freedom in Israel, for human rights, for an end to the occupation and for racial and ethnic equality.

But let's recall an incident last summer with Jewish pop singer Matisyahu. Organizers attempted to ban Matisyahu from performing at a music festival in Spain unless he denounced the Israeli occupation. Matisyahu is an American, not an Israeli. His only association with the Jewish state is that he himself is Jewish. It was a distasteful act of political theatre on the part of the organizers precisely because they drew a faulty line of logic: Israeli occupation is morally objectionable – all Jews (or at least famous ones) must take a public stand *because they are Jews*. (After a public outcry, the festival organizers backtracked.)

In a liberal democracy, whatever collective identities we hold – sexual, religious, ethnic and so on – are the domain of the private sphere unless we choose, as individuals, to act otherwise. So while I hope my fellow Jews will take a stand against an array of social ills, and am aware that some don't, I would be disgusted and disturbed if, say, a work colleague or a politician or a journalist in a local or national daily were to demand that I, because I happen to be Jewish, denounce one thing or another.

The upshot? Community conversations about dynamics relating to that community are crucial to have. But they are just that: community conversations. We must leave members of synagogues, mosques, churches, JCCs and other organizations to debate amongst themselves whether and how to publicly denounce actions committed in their name. The pages of the *Canadian Jewish News* may indeed be one useful forum among many for these tough conversations.

And perhaps the Jewish community, being more integrated, prosperous and secure than the Muslim community in North America, may even serve as a model. But demanding that sort of stand-taking by others in a civic forum violates the delicate multicultural balance that is intrinsic to a liberal democracy where the individual is the only meaningful object and subject of political action. ■

Ensuring a Jewish future through education

Mordechai Ben-Dat

Some 18 months after the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, the full extent of the ghoulish slaughter of European Jewry was already known. The full extent of the shock, however, had not yet been absorbed. Nor has it been, truly, even today.

In finding their place in the postwar world that blew clear from the cinder and ash of the battlefields – and, it must be said, from the crematoria – Jews around the world had little time then for memorials and monuments. The needs of the hour were too pressing.

Foremost among them was rallying in defence of the Yishuv, the Jews in Mandatory Palestine striving to bring forth a sovereign Jewish state in the face of murderous hostility from surrounding Arab nations.

But other urgent causes wrought by the war also stirred the hearts of Jews around the world. A.M. Klein, the brilliant Montreal-based writer, poet, scholar and advocate for the Jewish People wrote of one such cause in an editorial in the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* on Jan. 17, 1947.

"With the destruction of [European] Jewry a great, an important, a vital link in the chain [of our cultural tradition] was broken," he lamented. "The paramount question of Jewish culture today is: shall North American Jewry, free, vigorous and conscious of its responsibilities both to the past and the future, step in and fill up the breach? Shall North American Jewry now play the role which both position and duty impose upon it?"

But having posed these fundamental questions, Klein dismissed them as merely rhetorical. He could not imagine that the Jews whom the Nazis did not reach – some two-thirds of the 17 to 18 million who comprised world Jewry in 1939 – "could possibly contemplate the spiritual suicide that must follow from indifference" to the preservation of Jewish life, or as Klein called it, Jewish cultural tradition.

For Klein the answer was obvious.

He had no doubt Jews worldwide would immediately tend to the survival of a Jewish future even as they would tend to the healing of the survivors and the protection and defence of a sovereign Jewish home. The way to achieve the survival of a Jewish future was equally obvious to Klein. He tells us in typically elegant prose.

"Whether we are a People of the Book is not merely a matter of destiny but of will, and that will is best manifested, both in our own personal respect for the treasures of our heritage and in the support which we give to our cultural institutions. Such a key institution is the Talmud Torah [Jewish education]... It is here that [the students and the graduates] first catch hold of those strands which must forever knit them to their past and here that they forge those minds and those wills of which their people today so grievously stand in need."

The situation and issues that confront the Jewish People in January 2016 are not those that confronted us in January 1947. But nor are they so different, either.

The State of Israel, now in its 68th year, though imperfect, thrives in so many respects that were unimaginable in 1947. But not even for one day since its birth has its existence been accepted by the Arab world. Moreover, as the historian Joshua Muravchik recently noted, "hatred of Israel is the most deadly thing facing the Jewish People since Hitler."

And what would Klein say of the way in which we have tended to the survival of the Jewish future? The cultural institution that for him was the chief guarantor of that survival – Jewish education, in all its manifest forms – has become shamefully beyond the financial reach throughout North America for most of the grandchildren of his 1947 readers.

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We gain strength by giving

Rabbi Jay Kelman

As Canada begins welcoming 25,000 Syrian refugees, we should think of the flourishing Jewish community that once existed in Syria. The Jewish world owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to Judy Feld Carr who, at great personal risk, rescued over 3,000 Syrian Jews. They were remnants of a once great and glorious community dating back thousands of years.

Among that earlier group of Syrian refugees was 11-year-old Elie Horn, who fled with his family to Brazil in 1944. He has built a successful real estate company, and most recently was the first Brazilian (and as far as I can tell the first shomer Shabbat Jew), together with his wife, Susy, to sign The Giving Pledge. This initiative begun by Warren Buffet and Bill and Melinda Gates asks the world's billionaires to contribute at least one-half of their wealth to charity, either during their lifetime or in their will. To date, some 141 billionaires have done so.

> *Doing what's good is a great investment.*

One can be forgiven for having missed Horn's pledge, as it was given on the same day that Mark Zuckerberg pledged to donate 99 per cent of his shares in Facebook during his lifetime, an estimated $45 billion (US). He and his wife, Priscilla Chan, signed The Giving Pledge in honour of the birth of their first child.

In explaining his decision to give, Horn said, "As human beings, we will carry nothing with us to the other world – the only things we shall take are the good deeds that we accomplish in this world. We are in this world to be tested, and each one of us must grant the fruit of his abilities. Doing what's good is a great investment. That's so obvious."

It is obvious – in theory. But as we know, theory and practice often diverge. While it may be hard to understand how one can amass so much wealth and not agree to donate at least half (perhaps invest would be a better word), it is equally clear that for most people – billionaires or not – helping others with their wealth is tragically hard for them to do. The Forbes list of billionaires of March 2 had 1,826 names on it. In other words, just over 92 per cent of the world's billionaires have yet to pledge to donate half their wealth to charity. The fact that 141 billionaires have agreed to do this is most gratifying and will go a long way to making this world a better place. Whatever they may have achieved in business pales in comparison to the true legacy of their lives. Imagine how much more could be done if the other 92 per cent joined in. And imagine what might happen if just a small fraction of corporate wealth went to charity. In its latest quarter, Apple reported cash on hand of $205 billion.

Under the new Liberal government, Canadians earning over $200,000 will be subject to an increased tax rate on that income from 29 per cent to 33 per cent. At the same time, donations made on any income above that $200,0000 threshold will see their donation credit also increased to 33 per cent, making donations even more beneficial from a tax perspective.

Our Jewish community in Canada is blessed with a good number of billionaires. We eagerly wait for them to join Elie and Susy Horn in sharing their blessings with others. Horn has announced that his focus of giving will be on "secular and religious education." Let us hope that this Syrian refugee's initiative will benefit both the Jewish and the general communities.

Here are his words of inspiration: "I make my pledge with pleasure, and the good feeling that I tried my best to give meaning to my mission in this world (my late father gave 100 per cent of what he had). The more we give, the more meaningful and stronger we shall become." ■

Send comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org

You can't go back to yesterday

Norma Baumel Joseph

Alice in Wonderland proclaims: "I can't go back to yesterday because I was a different person then!"

Uncanny what comes out of the mouths of young people. Even fictionalized young people!

Obviously, I think it is a most valuable insight that many of us could benefit from. We often muse, if only I had done it this way. Or if only I could go back and fix things, or speak to mom, or ask forgiveness from dad. Immigrants speak of the home country with all its beauty and richness, forgetting the harshness and the realities of today. Older people always want to go back to their youth. The desire to relive or go back seems so natural and ever present, yet so unrealistic.

We all know we can't go back. We know the impossibility and the rules of physics. But we think (or dream) that if there was a time machine, we could go back and enjoy it. We neglect the truths of Alice's wisdom.

The fact is we simply are not the same people today that we were then. We cannot go back for we are not the "we" we were then. How totally and wonderfully confusing. Just right for Alice's world, but also just right for our self-understanding. Human growth is not just a haphazard event; it is a necessary and sufficient condition of human reality. Without change and growth, there is no life. If we stagnate in our education, relationships and patterns of interactions, if we have no growth in our cultural, social and educational lives, then we are not alive. We are not the same today as we were yesterday. What is amazing is that we manage to keep friends, family and co-workers as we flourish.

Our lives parallel the movement of the planets. Earth constantly rotates, yet we feel it not. We change, yet we feel it not. The moment the earth stops rotating around the sun, life, as we know it ends. The moment humans stop moving and growing, life ends. Our cultural and physical evolution is of necessity continuous. Our task then, the only matter under our control, is to ensure the direction of change – that it is healthy, precious and constructive.

> *Don't go back to relive. Look back to learn and appreciate.*

One important caveat: we cannot live in the past, we cannot be what we once were. But we cannot and should not ignore or forget the past. Our heritage, our wisdom is all buried there. So we must look to the past, not to live there, not to re-experience it, but to learn from it. We can treasure it as the source of our present accomplishments (or problems). We can see the contexts of our reality in history.

There are valuable lessons to be learned there. Why deny them? That would not be the path of wisdom Alice sets us on. But looking through the looking glass is not an experiment in going back in time to live there. It opens an opportunity to see things in different modes of existence, to express new ways of seeing and being, so that we can learn from our past mistakes and past successes. But we are not what we were yesterday. Our sightlines shift. We might see more clearly, or poorly, as through a veil, or through a microscope, focused but enlarged beyond all reality.

Alice's lesson then is look we must, but accept the difference in you. Don't go back to relive. Look back to learn and appreciate.

I have had many opportunities of late to look back and think of times gone by. Times of health and happiness, when I imagined I had all I wanted and plenty of time to be me. I cannot go back. I am different now. I appreciate the me of now, and look forward to the new me of tomorrow. Strangely, as I think of Alice's quote, I am grateful, thankful and glad. ■

News

Jews part of group sponsoring Syrian peace advocate

PAUL LUNGEN
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All things considered, Aboud Dandachi picked a bad time to return to Syria.

For a good part of his life, he lived in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, where he studied, and went on to work in the IT field in the Gulf states. In 2011, he returned to his hometown of Homs, where he bought a house and got engaged – the kind of stuff you do when you're expecting to begin a normal life.

Syrian dictator Bashar Assad had other plans. Not long after Dandachi's return, Assad launched his bloody campaign against the Syrian people. Homs, a rebel stronghold, was bombed mercilessly, and Dandachi, like other Syrians, found himself on the move. He now lives in Istanbul as a "guest" of the Turkish government, with no legal status and no way to ensure he is not forced to leave again at any time.

Dandachi's plight has touched a small group of Jewish, Christian and Arab Canadians who have mobilized to bring him to Canada as a sponsored refugee.

They have approached Jewish Immigrant Aid Services(JIAS) to handle the paperwork and legalities of sponsoring Dandachi, and they've launched a fundraising campaign that has collected nearly $11,000 toward the minimum $12,760 required to sponsor a single refugee. The Indiegogo component has raised more than $2,100 (US) toward a $4,000 goal.

They hope to have the paperwork in place and the full sum raised by the end of the year so that Dandachi can come to Canada as soon as possible, perhaps in as little as six months, said Lynne Teperman, spokesperson for the local sponsorship group.

Teperman has been familiar with Dandachi since January, when a friend showed her his blog site. She was impressed that at the time of the Hyper Cacher massacre in Paris, he had defended the Jewish community. She later saw him interviewed by the BBC and other news outlets and was impressed that he was friendly to Israel, against anti-Semitism and against Islamic extremism. "He's your incredible Arab liberal," she said.

Susan Oppenheim is also part of Dandachi's Canadian sponsorship group. She's been in contact with him for months, sending him articles about Canada and assimilation issues. She's confident he'll fit right in to Canadian society, given his fluency in English and professional qualifications. What's more, "He's a good person," she said. "He has nowhere to go if the Turkish government decides they don't want Syrians there."

A third member of the sponsorship group who wants to remain anonymous said she was impressed by Dandachi's blog reports that lauded Israeli efforts to help wounded Syrian civilians. He's written openly and favourably about Israel, and it would be suicidal for him to return to Syria, she said.

The sponsorship group consists of "private people who've come together around a particular person, because as Jews and supporters of Israel, for someone to have taken up our cause at personal risk, we have a moral obligation to help," she said.

Dandachi said he's grateful and a bit overwhelmed by the response of Canadian Jews to his plight and that of other Syrian refugees. "So many Jewish Canadian communities are helping Syrians, it's astounding to me," he said.

Aboud Dandachi

Speaking by phone from Istanbul, Dandachi, 39, told *The CJN* he spent his formative years in Saudi Arabia, where he went to high school, and attended university in Jordan. In Saudi Arabia, he was taught Jews are "treacherous. Jews tried to kill Muhammad," that they're a source of "never-ending enmity" and that "Jews are an evil entity who forever has to be feared and fought."

It was much the same in Syria and Jordan. It took a long time to change his attitude. There was no "Paul on the road to Damascus" moment when another perspective dawned on him, he said, but a key part of it was learning about Israel's medical aid for wounded Syrians. "That didn't fit" with what he'd learned, he said.

At the same time, he saw Hezbollah and Iran support Assad, who was slaughtering his own people. "The people who we were told are our friends were killing us. The people who we were told are our enemies were helping us," he said.

He felt Israelis' medical assistance was provided "out of deep human decency" that required a response from the Arab side. "We are not destined to be enemies" he said.

He began to express his views online, promoting good relations with Jews and Israel and criticizing extremism.

In July 2014, he condemned an incident in Calgary during a pro-Gaza demonstration, which turned ugly when a group of "pro-Palestine thugs," as he called them, held a "lynching" of a small group of pro-Israel counter-demonstrators, knocking one unconscious and attacking the others.

"On that day, it wasn't just a small group of Jews who were assaulted; it was the very core and definition of the values of Canadian society that were so blatantly and viciously violated," he wrote.

His writing on Israel and Jews didn't win him friends among other Syrians, including his own family. His relatives have seen him on Israeli TV and they're concerned. They told him, "People will hold it against us," Dandachi recounted.

He has lived in Istanbul for two years working as an online project manager for a Canadian firm, and has only good things to say about Canadians. His employer is accommodating, and he's been in touch with longtime friends in Calgary who "stood by me when they didn't have to. I won't ever forget that."

As he awaits word on moving to Canada, he knows that as a single male – his engagement broke apart during the war – he'll be flagged as problematic for security concerns. "As a refugee," he said, "you learn to ration your hope." ■

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Victoria shul raising funds to sponsor Syrian family

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

Rabbi Harry Brechner

It's been just over three weeks since Victoria's Congregation Emanu-El approved a motion to sponsor a Syrian refugee family and already $24,000 has been raised.

"About half of that is from the Jewish community and the other half is from the Victoria community," said Jean Dragushan, chair of the congregation's refugee sponsorship steering committee. The committee hopes to raise $50,000 and expects to sponsor a Syrian Muslim family.

"As we cannot forget our oppression and persecution over millennia, we also count our blessings for living in freedom and comfort in Canada," said the synagogue spiritual leader, Rabbi Harry Brechner.

"Jewish ethics enjoin us to reach out to others to help end their suffering. The concept of tikkun, or repair, is central to Jewish belief, in that it is our duty to try to fix what is broken in this world."

The 153-year-old Conservative shul is Canada's oldest synagogue in continuous operation. It has about 220 member families in a city with about 2,500 Jews.

The Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria, which offers services for immigrant and refugee newcomers, will help Congregation Emanu-El with the sponsorship process and the identification of a family to sponsor, likely one that already has relatives on the island, Dragushan added. The timeline for the family's arrival is anywhere from a few months up to a year.

Congregation members have been mostly positive about the sponsorship initiative, and if any concerns have been raised, they've been mostly about fear of the unknown, Dragushan said.

"It's a massive effort bringing as many refugees to Canada as are coming in now," she reflected. "We haven't seen so many people displaced by war since the 1930s."

Dragushan said the committee has invited a couple of other Jewish organizations on the island to participate in the sponsorship, but has not yet received a response. The initiative has attracted interest from the media on Vancouver Island, specifically CBC. Dragushan said she was interviewed by a reporter about the dynamic of a Jewish community sponsoring a Muslim family.

"The family we sponsor will need to know they've been sponsored by a Jewish group and be comfortable with that," she said. "But the Intercultural Association told us it's highly unlikely to be a problem." ■

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CORRECTION

The article "Vancouver Jews rally to help Syrian refugees" (Dec. 10) stated incorrectly that Rabbi Howard Siegel is spiritual leader of Beth Israel Synagogue in Richmond, B.C. In fact, he is spiritual leader of Richmond's Beth Tikvah Synagogue, while Congregation Beth Israel is located in Vancouver. *The CJN* regrets the error.

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Montreal Jews and Muslims join to help Syrian refugees

Temple was first local Jewish organization to raise funds and now hopes to sponsor three families

JANICE ARNOLD
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Jews and Muslims can find common cause in assisting Syrian refugees, and in doing so, appreciate the similarity of their religious values.

That was the message conveyed at a meeting of members of the two communities addressed by Rabbi Lisa Grushcow, senior rabbi of Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, and Shaheen Ashraf, secretary of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Montreal chapter.

About 50 people attended the event at the Atwater Library on Dec. 15, convened by the new Jewish-Muslim Forum of Montreal.

It was the first open event of the group, which is an initiative of the New York-based Foundation for Ethnic Understanding (FFEU), in partnership with CRARR (Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations), a local non-profit organization that has been combating discrimination for more than 30 years.

Since 2008, FFEU has fostered Muslim-Jewish dialogue around the world, including in Toronto, organizing "twinning" events annually in November and December. This year, such events took place in more than 30 cities, said Walter Ruby, director of the program.

The temple was the first Montreal Jewish group to commit to sponsoring refugees. It announced in September that it would sponsor at least one family and undertake to raise a minimum of $30,000.

Rabbi Grushcow said the congregation is now hoping to sponsor three families. All the paperwork has been done for the first family and most of it for the second, she said. The temple is now trying to identify a third family to sponsor. As is the norm, the temple does not know when the families will arrive, and temple members may be given as little as 24 hours notice.

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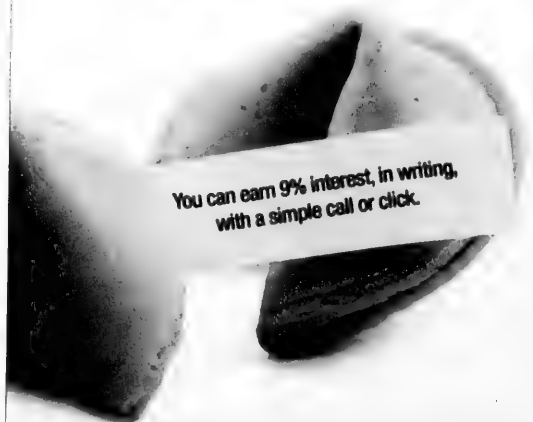
Rabbi Lisa Grushcow, left, and Shaheen Ashraf find inspiration in Judaism and Islam in their work for refugees. JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

Some investors find their fortunes in the oddest places.



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The response from the 900-member Reform congregation was beyond expectations. Officially launched on the first day of Rosh Hashanah – a Monday – the project raised $25,000 by that Friday and more than $40,000 by Yom Kippur, Rabbi Grushcow said. At the end of the month, the total was close to $70,000.

Moreover, temple members are eager to lend their expertise, including immigration lawyers David Berger and David Cohen, or volunteer in other ways during the year after the refugees arrive, a process that's part of the sponsorship commitment.

Sponsors must identify specific people they want to assist. Rabbi Grushcow said the temple's refugees were found through relatives living in Montreal. For their security, she did not want to publicize details about them, but it can be made known that they are coming from refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon. One family has five children. There is a pharmacist and a French teacher among the parents. And they are Muslim.

Rabbi Grushcow said the congregation never made religion a consideration, but the attitude outside has not been so open.

"People quietly ask, 'Are they Christian or Muslim? Christians are a minority and are being persecuted, and are you sure Muslims want to be sponsored by a synagogue?'"

> *This welcoming gesture will give Canada a good name again in the world, especially the Middle East, where it is sorely needed.*

Others have been less polite, even Islamophobic, she has found. "They hate us, they may be dangerous – are you sure you want to do this?" she quoted some as saying.

"My response is that the only relevant question is that we are people of faith, and the Torah calls upon us to welcome the stranger," Rabbi Grushcow said, and this crisis speaks to our common humanity.

She added that this is an opportunity to build relationships with Muslims and get beyond stereotypes.

Ashraf said Islam also teaches that its adherents must help the stranger, especially those who are the victims of oppression.

"This welcoming gesture will give Canada a good name again in the world, especially the Middle East, where it is sorely needed," she said, adding that Canada has shown "political courage and vision at a time when xenophobia in Europe and the United States is growing."

Muslims and Jews, as "children of Abraham," should "be in step with each other." Ashraf said she is already pitching in with some Jewish individuals who are sponsors.

This event served as a chance for those involved with refugee relief to get to know each other.

In practical terms, Rabbi Grushcow said Jews and Muslims can begin by sharing their expertise, for example in legal matters, and co-ordinating their efforts.

The other participants included Bilal Hamideh, a board member of the Canadian Muslim Forum and Canadian Alliance for Syrian Aid steering committee member; and Karen Mock of Toronto, representing the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims, which works with the FFEU.

An unscheduled intervenor who was warmly welcomed was Muhamad Al Bukaai, who identified himself as a Syrian refugee who arrived three months earlier. He thanked everyone for what they are doing to help other refugees.

Ruby also congratulated Canadians generally for their "human decency" in contrast to the "anti-Muslim demagogy" in the United States.

"That you are welcoming 25,000 refugees is mind-boggling, when my country can't even get it together to take 10,000," he said.

Elsewhere in the Jewish community, the Reconstructionist Congregation Dorshei Emet is trying to raise $30,000 to qualify as a refugee sponsor and has begun the process of selecting individuals or a family, as required by the federal government.

The modern Orthodox Adath Israel Congregation has been collecting clothing and personal care products to donate to Syrian refugees in Jordan. Rabbi Michael Whitman said an individual he can vouch for will take the goods directly to Jordan for distribution. ■

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Rabbis, bishops highlight danger facing Christians

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Bishop Douglas Crosby

Not long ago, Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl was speaking to an acquaintance who's originally from Mosul, Iraq. The man had been in touch with relatives back home and relayed disturbing news. They told him people from ISIS had scrawled the Arabic letter *nun* on the door of their house.

Nun is the first letter in the word "Nazarene" and was used to identify the family as Christian, Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said.

Contemplating what he'd heard, the rabbi wondered "what it would be like if in Canada in 1939, '40, '41, '42, I got a call from a relative in Europe. How would I feel?"

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl, however, is not without resources. As co-chair of the Canadian Rabbinic Caucus and active in multifaith dialogue, he joined with Most Rev. Douglas Crosby, head of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, to write a letter to Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion, hoping to focus the minister's attention on the issue.

The letter calls on the federal government to "make a priority of advocating for at-risk Christian communities throughout the Middle East and Africa, and likewise explore new and effective ways of providing diplomatic and humanitarian assistance to alleviate their suffering." Rabbi Frydman-Kohl is hoping to follow up the letter with a personal meeting with Dion.

The letter cites a report that "between 200 million and 230 million [Christians] face daily threats of murder, beating, imprisonment and torture, and a further 350 million to 400 million encounter discrimination in areas such as jobs and housing." It further cites findings by the Pew Research Center that "Christians around the world face more persecution, restrictions, hostility and harassment than any other religious group."

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said he began to take more of an interest in the issue after a meeting late last winter hosted by the then-minister of immigration and attended by local representatives of minority Middle East religions.

In attendance were spokespeople from Eastern Christian churches – Christianity's earliest churches – as well as Yazidis, Roman Catholics, Anglicans and the United Church. The focus of the meeting was refugee relief and how to preserve indigenous Middle Eastern religious groups. Soon after, Canada announced it would welcome 10,000 Syrian refugees.

"I became more sensitized to their plight, and I began to do my own reading," Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said.

He learned the ancient churches were facing persecution in the region. Jews, too, had faced discrimination and danger, and 850,000 were forced to abandon their communities in the Middle East and North Africa. The vast majority settled in Israel, the Jews' ancestral homeland, but for the members of the churches, "this is their historic homeland… They want to remain. They don't want to re-settle in Canada. They want to remain close to their communities."

By bringing their concerns to Dion's attention, the religious leaders are adding their "moral voice" to the issue, Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said.

Bishop Crosby said the idea for the joint letter arose at a meeting of the Catholic-Rabbinic Caucus dialogue."We want the Canadian government to be aware, first of all," he said. "It's a new government. I think the idea is that if the two of us sign [the letter], it might capture the attention of the minister and demonstrate we're aware of this."

Bishop Crosby told *The CJN* that grave reports are filtering out of the region. "The Christian community in the Middle East is diminishing, because people are fleeing. They fear for their lives," he said.

The situation for Christians in Iraq and Iran is particularly dire, but there are also Christian refugees from Syria fleeing the conflict there, he added.

Rev. Karen Hamilton, general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches, representing 25 Christian denominations, applauded the letter for highlighting the plight of Christians. "People are being persecuted for their religion in a region that is the birthplace of Christianity," she said.

She said Dion should invite Rabbi Frydman-Kohl and Bishop Crosby to discuss the issue, and she suggested other steps to highlight the plight of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa: promote it for discussion at the United Nations; make it an agenda item when faith leaders meet and when world leaders meet; and continue to welcome refugees, among them Christians. ■

B.C. Jewish MP enjoys bringing people together

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

Dan Ruimy

If there's one thing Dan Ruimy is good at, it's getting people together and promoting dialogue.

Ruimy is the new Liberal MP for the riding of Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge in British Columbia, a suburban-rural district a half hour from Vancouver. He won the riding last fall with 34 per cent of the vote, beating his Tory and NDP rivals in a tight three-way race. Its predecessor riding had been held by the Conservatives since 2004 and before that was a Reform/Canadian Alliance stronghold. The Liberals ran a distant third in the district in 2011.

Ruimy is also the 53-year-old son of Jewish Moroccan immigrants to Canada.

In the mid-1950s, Ruimy's parents Andre and Jacqueline moved to Montreal's Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood, where they raised their five sons and ran Cantor's Bakery in Côte-des-Neiges, as well as a grocery store in Habitat 67. Dan attended synagogue with his family on the High Holidays. Later, a 27-year career in the food and beverage industry led the unmarried Ruimy all over the country as he filled positions at McDonald's, A&W and Quiznos.

All that traveling took its toll, and by 2011, he was ready to settle down, get grounded in one community and find a place to call home. He chose Maple Ridge and purchased a second-hand bookstore that sold loose-leaf tea. Today, he's still the owner of Bean Around Books & Tea, and credits the tea and coffee shop as having played a pivotal role in his decision to enter politics.

"At Bean Around, I saw what happens when you include people in your community," he reflected. "Having spent my life in the hospitality industry, my personality is all about social contact. At the tea shop, I saw there was a craving for that, so I'd introduce people to each other and help make connections. It's quite an amazing thing to watch a 15-year-old engaging an 86-year-old in dialogue. When I started thinking about running for public office, I realized that this is what I could do for my community: create dialogue, bring people together and help people find solutions for the challenges they encounter every day."

Ruimy feels strongly about community and what comprises it.

"The Syrian refugees are a perfect example," he said. "By including them we become a stronger community. Isn't that what Canada is all about? We're a nation built on immigration. We shouldn't shun people. We should welcome them with open arms, because that's our future as well."

> *I hope to be an agent of change and bring those opportunities to young people.*

Since being sworn in as a member of Parliament in November, Ruimy has hired extra staff for his shop to accommodate a busy schedule commuting to and from Ottawa.

But while he's no stranger to traveling for work, it's different this time, he said.

"This is my home base now. I have a community to come back to. In the past, I'd come back to an empty place where I didn't know my neighbours and wasn't involved, but for the first time in my life, I can actually say I'm coming home."

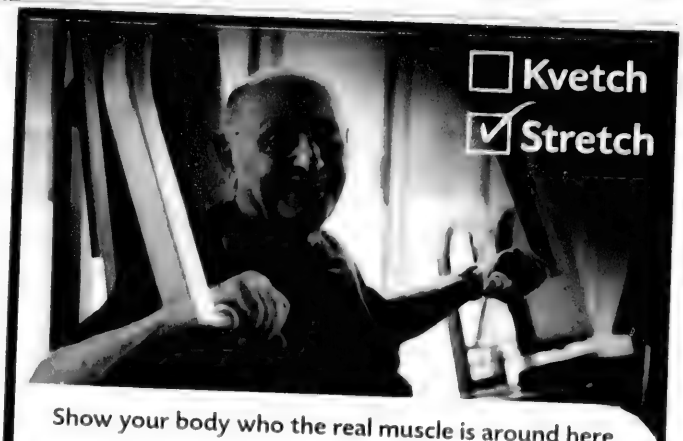
He plans to open a constituency office in his riding by next month. It's "tough" to be Jewishly affiliated in Maple Ridge, he said, given that there are few Jews living there. But in Ottawa, he's joined the Canada-Israel Interparliamentary Group.

"Having those roots is important to me, and I think we lose sight when we're not involved in that part of our community," he said.

Ruimy said the key issues he'll be working on are homelessness, affordable housing, helping struggling seniors, and providing assistance to youth trying to find jobs.

"There's lots of opportunity in Canada, but for some reason people have difficulty finding the programs," he said. "I hope to be an agent of change and help bring those opportunities to young people."

The most exciting moment of his parliamentary career to date was attending the first sitting of the new House earlier this month. "For the first time, you're seeing the 334 people who got elected, and at that moment it sunk in how lucky I am to have been given this opportunity. It's a privilege, really, and I feel proud that people sent me here to represent them, that they put their trust and confidence in me." ■



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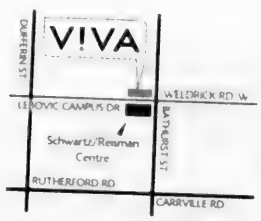

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Nursing home raises funds to improve quality of life

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

The Saul and Claribel Simkin Centre, Winnipeg's Jewish nursing home marked Giving Tuesday recently with birthday parties for six of its oldest residents and a pitch to supporters to contribute to the institution's campaign to raise $147,000 by the end of March for quality-of-life enhancements for its 199 residents.

"Ninety per cent of residents at the Simkin Centre suffer from a dementia-related illness, and many have barriers to mobility or communication," said Laurel Hogan, the facility's fundraising officer. "As a result of advances in health care, we have people coming to us with very complex health issues.

"While the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority [WRHA] provides for our core funding needs, it doesn't cover spiritual care, volunteer services, therapeutic recreation, end-of-life care, Shabbat and holiday services, along other programs like music therapy, special events, and our concert series."

Hogan said the seniors residence has been offering music therapy for six years.

"We piloted the music program for iPods two years ago," she said. "The one-on-one music therapy program with iPads and iPods helps to stimulate people with cognitive disabilities and dementia to be able to interact better socially."

> *The one-on-one music therapy program with iPads and iPods helps to stimulate people with cognitive disabilities and dementia to be able to interact better socially.*

One of the goals of the current campaign is to raise $7,000 to purchase 10 more iPads and five more iPods, Hogan said.

She noted that $250 will buy one iPod plus accessories, $750 will buy one iPad plus accessories, and $60 pays for one art or music therapy session for a resident.

"We also hope to raise funds in support of art therapy sessions and regular massage therapy," Hogan said. "We would require an additional $12,000 for massage therapy and $3,000 more for regular art therapy. The total cost [for massage, art and music therapy] would be about $75,000."

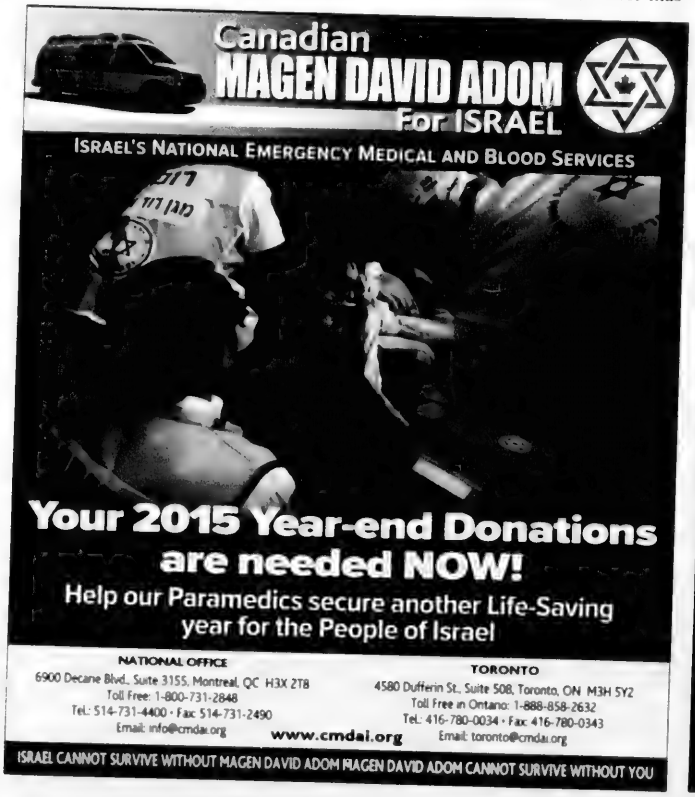
Simkin Centre resident Jean Wolfman, 102, sings with her daughters, Shayla Gertenstein, left, and Phyllis Palansky.

The Simkin Centre has one major fundraiser a year – an annual fundraising walk in the spring that brought in $23,000 last year, Hogan said, adding that interest from several endowment funds under the auspices of the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba will also help the cause.

"We're sending letters out to members of the community [this month] asking for donations," she said. "As of Nov. 30, we raised $103,000 in donations and grants."

"We are also working on building a new database to make fundraising more efficient, and we're in the process of forming a new foundation."

Giving Tuesday is a global day of charitable giving that happens each year after Black Friday and Cyber Monday. It's a time when Canadians, charities and businesses come together to celebrate giving and participate in activities that support charities and non-profits, Hogan said. ■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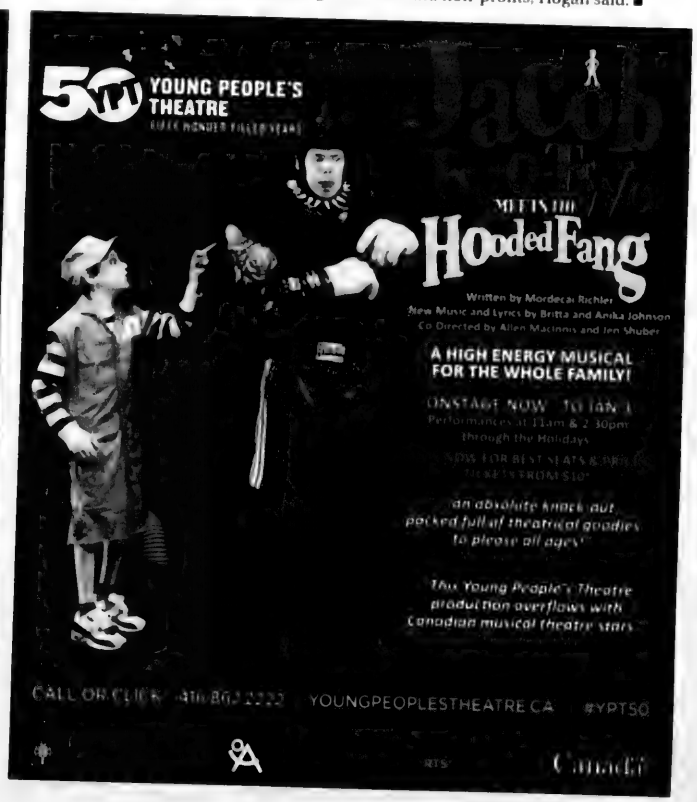
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Supermarket mogul was revered in community

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Arnold Steinberg

His name was synonymous with the supermarket chain of which he was chief financial officer, but most of Arnold Steinberg's life was devoted to higher education and health care, especially associated with his beloved alma mater, McGill University.

Steinberg, who was McGill's 18th and first Jewish chancellor, died suddenly on Dec. 11 at age 82. Steinberg was also founding chairman of the board of the McGill University Health Centre.

"Arnold was a prince of a man," said former principal and vice-chancellor Heather Munroe-Blum, who worked closely with Steinberg during his five-year term, which ended last year. "He shaped McGill, Montreal and Canada in deeply progressive and positive ways – uniquely, indelibly.

"He influenced everyone he met through his gracious warmth, joyous optimism and incisive intelligence."

His chancellorship capped 60 years of service to McGill. At his death he held the title of chancellor emeritus. Steinberg was also revered in the Jewish community for leadership and philanthropy. In September, he was named man of the year by the Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal. He served on the executive committee of Federation CJA and the foundation's investment committee.

Among the many organizations he supported, in close collaboration with wife Blema, were the Jewish Public Library, Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors, Mount Sinai Hospital and YM-YWHA.

Although Steinberg was destined for a career in the family business after graduating from McGill in 1954 with a bachelor of commerce (a Harvard MBA followed), he always had a keen interest in improving public health.

In the 1960s, as a senior Steinberg's executive, he partnered with the Montreal Children's Hospital's Dr. Charles Scriver to campaign for adding vitamin D to milk as an effective way to prevent rickets, then still rampant in Quebec. Steinberg's major milk supplier refused to add the vitamin, so Steinberg issued an ultimatum: do it or lose the contract with the province's largest supermarket chain. It worked and rickets became a scourge of the past in the province.

Steinberg would go on to serve as chairman of the board of governors of the McGill University-Montreal Children's Hospital Research Institute for 19 years, and later 10 years on McGill's board of governors.

In the past decade, one of his and his wife's key philanthropic interests has been McGill's Steinberg Centre for Simulation and Interactive Learning, the first health-care training facility of its kind in Canada when it opened in 2006. In October, the Steinbergs donated an additional $7.5 million for its expansion and to upgrade its technology. The funding will let it bring together education and research and, in the near future, patient and community education, under one roof. The gift brought the couple's total donations to McGill to more than $17 million.

Another activity that absorbed him in latter years was, until 2010, chairing the board of Canada Health Infoway, a joint federal-provincial-territorial initiative to develop electronic health information systems in Canada. The work complemented his responsibilities with the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, the largest of the federal government's funding agencies.

Steinberg was the son of Nathan Steinberg, one of the children of Ida Steinberg, who founded the grocery store in 1917, which grew into Quebec's first modern supermarket chain. After the family sold the business in 1989 (it folded three years later), Steinberg became co-owner of the investment holding firm Cleman Ludmer Steinberg Inc.

McGill principal Suzanne Fortier said: "Arnold's five-year tenure as chancellor of McGill University was extraordinary… he brought to the job a boundless curiosity and focused intelligence."

Among other honours, Steinberg was named a member of the Order of Canada in 1993, he received an honorary doctorate from McGill in 2000 and the Université de Montréal in 2009, and was made an officer of the Order of Quebec in 2013.

Besides Blema, a McGill professor emeritus of political science, Steinberg is survived by their children, Margot, Donna and Adam, and five grandchildren. ■

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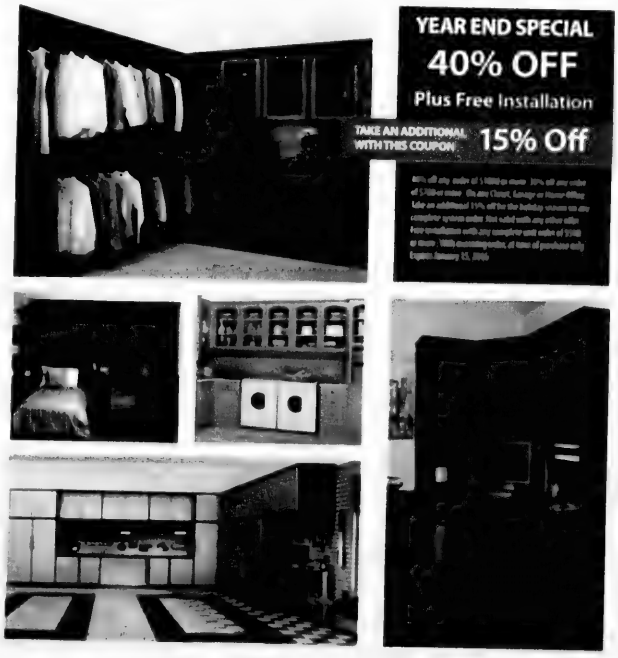

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
DECEMBER 24, 2015

Canadian Sephardim mull Spanish citizenship offer

Montrealers seem more eager than Torontonians to go through complicated and expensive application process

SHERI SHEFA
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When it comes to a new Spanish law that allows descendants of Jews expelled during the Inquisition to seek Spanish citizenship, Sephardi Jews in Toronto appear to be less enthusiastic about it than their Montreal counterparts.

According to Simon Keslassy, the president of the Communauté Juive Marocaine de Toronto (CMJT), there don't seem to be many Sephardim who are eager to take advantage of the opportunity.

"Even people from CJMT, they are not very hot on this, because I heard from people that there are a lot of procedures to do this application, and it's a long process. It's not very easy," Keslassy said, adding that he didn't see much benefit to applying for Spanish citizenship.

"I'm not interested in having a Spanish passport. There may be some people who want to do it, because Spain belongs to the European Union, and once they have a Spanish passport, they'll belong to the European community... Otherwise, it's not advantageous for anything."

But Raphael Assor, the director of government relations for the Communauté Sépharade Unifiée du Québec (CSUQ), said there are many Jews in Montreal who are interested in the opportunity.

Although it is too soon to know how many people are applying, Assor said he suspects the number could be anywhere from 100 to 300.

He said that after the Spanish citizenship law passed in October, the CSUQ held a meeting with the consul general of Spain in Montreal that was attended by about 150 people.

Currently, fewer than 5,000 Sephardim, out of an estimated 3.5 million worldwide, have sought citizenship since the law was passed two months ago. Spain has one of the smallest Jewish communities in the European Union, with only about 50,000 Jews out of a total population of about 47 million.

According to Soeren Kern, a senior fellow at the Gatestone Institute, a non-profit international policy council and think-tank, there are so many hurdles to obtaining Spanish citizenship that most of those who might qualify would be deterred from following through.

Spain's King Felipe VI

He wrote that among some of the many provisions required to obtain citizenship, applicants must prove their Sephardi background through their ancestry, surname and spoken language – either Ladino, a medieval Jewish-Spanish language, or Haketia, a mixture of Hebrew, Spanish and Judeo-Moroccan Arabic.

For younger hopefuls, most applicants would be disqualified from the start because of the language requirement, since both are dying languages spoken mostly by elderly Latin Americans, Moroccans and Turks.

In addition to the language requirement, applicants living outside Spain must have their heritage verified and certified by Jewish associations or rabbinical authorities in their home countries, and then they must be validated again by the Madrid-based Federation of Jewish Communities.

An applicant is also required to travel to Spain at their own expense to write two exams that demonstrate basic Spanish language proficiency and an understanding of the Spanish Constitution, culture and society.

Late last month, Spain's King Felipe VI honoured Sephardi Jews at a ceremony recognizing the new law and thanked them for "having kept like a precious treasure your language and your customs that are ours, too. Thank you, too, for making love prevail over rancour and for teaching your children to love this country. How we have missed you."

The law was passed in an effort to rectify the damage done to Spain's Jewish community during the Spanish Inquisition in the 15th century, when 400,000 Jews were expelled and tens of thousands more were either forced to convert to Catholicism or executed.

But Yehuda Azoulay, founder of the Toronto-based Sephardic Legacy Institute, whose goal is to preserve Sephardi heritage, said the new law elicits more questions rather than provides closure for Sephardim.

"Why all of the sudden is the Spanish government giving citizenship to Sephardi Jews? What are the benefits? What is the real intention behind the scenes in the Spanish government? Do Sephardi Jews need this citizenship?" Azoulay asked.

Jon Iñarritu García, a Spanish congressman, challenged the government's new law in an address to Spain's Parliament last June.

"We want to express our disappointment, because this law, which was supposed to restore justice, has become increasingly complicated. If we observe the procedures, the prerequisites, the number of documents to be submitted, the certified translations, the fees, the language and culture exams and the need to travel to Spain, we cannot but wonder about the reason for all of these hurdles," he said, adding that the cost for each applicant could be up to $6,700 (US).

Azoulay said that he hasn't heard of anyone who intends to follow through with the process.

"No one really talks or cares about it... I spoke to the Canadian ambassador [to Spain], and he seemed to have very little interest," Azoulay said.

"It is vague and unclear, therefore, in my humble opinion it is all a waste of time."

Assor, whose parents come from Spanish-speaking cities in Morocco, said he'll seek citizenship and suspects many in Montreal will do the same.

While some have expressed dismay and have been deterred by the complicated process, he receives daily calls from people who are eager to begin their applications.

Assor said most have no plan to go back to Spain, "because our lives are here, but we appreciate the recognition. It is very important that after more than five centuries they recognized the expulsion."

Keslassy, also a Moroccan Jew, agreed that the acknowledgement from the king is important to the community.

"One thing I'm happy about is that the king of Spain had a meeting with the Jewish community in Spain... he asked for forgiveness for what happened in 1492 and he welcomed all the Sephardi, Spanish-speaking Jews to come to Spain. It was a good thing. But for a passport, I'm not interested," he said. ■

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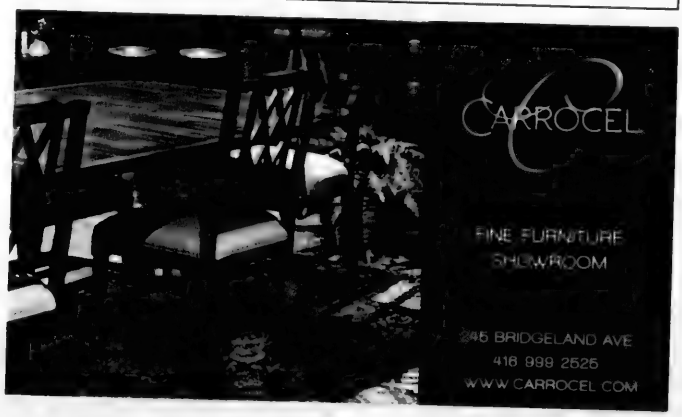

Jewish restaurants have long history in Toronto

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Get a group of people together socially and more often than not the conversation will veer towards food. Usually the topic is restaurants. For foodies the talk may be culinary trends, and for young men, craft beer is all the rage.

Any discussion about Jewish food in Toronto often leads to the inevitable bagel debate. Montreal, Gryfe's, Bagel World – everyone has their favourite. And that was no different for the six people who met for brunch at United Bakers Dairy Restaurant in Lawrence Plaza.

They had gathered for an event that focused specifically on Jewish food – a presentation on the history of Jewish restaurants in Toronto by Ellen Scheinberg, president of Heritage Professionals. They were taking part in a brunch that was a Heritage Toronto silent auction prize won by Irving Himel and his son, Andrew.

The Himels were the highest bidders for breakfast with Steve Paikin, host of TVO's *The Agenda*; *Toronto Star* food writer, Corey Mintz; Toronto City Councillor and TTC chair, Josh Colle, and Scheinberg, a co-editor of *The Ward* (Coach House Books 2015) and the facilitator of the morning's discussion. She and Andrew Himel are both board members of Heritage Toronto.

Also on hand to talk about their restaurant were Philip and Ruth Ladovsky, the brother and sister team who run United Bakers. The 103-year-old establishment is one of the longest running family-owned restaurants in the country.

United Bakers was founded in 1912 by Philip and Ruth's paternal grandparents, Aaron and Sarah Ladovsky, Polish immigrants from Kielce. Sarah and Aaron both had baking backgrounds. Their marriage united the two baking families, hence the bakery's name.

As the brunch group consumed a sumptuous meal of scrambled eggs, blintzes, latkes, bagels, vegetarian chopped liver and United Bakers' signature pea soup, Ruth Ladovsky gave a brief history of the restaurant.

Its original location was on Agnes Street in the Ward, an immigrant neighbourhood in downtown Toronto bounded by University Avenue and College Street, and Queen and Yonge streets. In the first decade of the 20th century, the ward was 80 per cent Jewish, Scheinberg said.

In 1920, United Bakers relocated to Spadina Avenue when the Jewish community moved to the Kensington Market area. Ruth said that Yiddish authors Sholem Asch and Isaac Bashevis Singer had both eaten at the restaurant.

In fact, in Singer's trilogy, *Love and Exile*, United Bakers was supposedly the inspiration for a fictional restaurant, where

Seen clockwise, from left, at a Heritage Toronto Brunch: Andrew Himel, historian Ellen Scheinberg, Irving Himel, TV host Steve Paikin, City Councillor and TTC chair Josh Colle, and food writer Corey Mintz
BARBARA SILVERSTEIN PHOTO

Rose Lieberman, Rose Green and Aaron and Sarah Ladovsky in front of United Bakers restaurant at 338 Spadina Ave., 1920.
ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

> *Everyone spoke Yiddish and knew one another*

"everyone spoke Yiddish and knew one another," she said.

Scheinberg pointed out that the first kosher restaurant was actually JS Goldenberg's, which opened on Terauley Street in 1908. His brother, William Goldenberg, ran a kosher restaurant across the street.

The Goldenberg restaurants also moved to Spadina Avenue, which became a prime strip for Jewish eateries. W. Goldenberg continued operating until the mid '50s.

Daiter's Fresh Market, which closed its doors this year after more than 80 years, began as a dairy restaurant on Kensington Avenue in 1937. The establishment moved to Bathurst Street in 1959, following the migration of the Jewish community from downtown to the Bathurst Street corridor in the '50s and '60s.

Shopsy's opened on Spadina Avenue in 1921. Down the block was Switzers, which started in the 1940s and remained at that location until 1991. United Bakers moved from Spadina Avenue to Lawrence Plaza in 1986.

Irving Himel, noted that pastrami and corned beef were more common in Toronto than smoked meat, which he said was a Montreal delicacy.

Mintz spoke about Caplansky's Deli, a delicatessen on College Street, which opened in 2007. He said owner Zane Caplansky, who changed his name from Caplan to the original Jewish name, epitomizes a trend called reverse assimilation. Rather than lose their heritage and assimilate, people market their ethnicity, Mintz explained. ■

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2015: the year in review

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Jews also weighed in on both sides of controversial election issues, such as wearing niqabs at citizenship ceremonies and how many and which Syrian refugees Canada should allow into the country.

Near the end of the year, as Trudeau renewed his pledge to resettle 25,000 refugees, Jewish groups and shuls across Canada stepped forward to help, even as some Jewish voices urged caution in vetting the newcomers to weed out Islamist elements.

In November, in the first test of Trudeau's election pledge to be as strong a friend of Israel as former prime minister Stephen Harper had been, Canada voted against an annual raft of Arab-sponsored UN resolutions targeting the Jewish state.

Other international stories that hit home this year included news last month that a former Bnei Akiva shaliach and teacher at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, Rabbi Ya'acov Don, 51, was killed in a West Bank terror attack, part of ongoing violence in Israel marked by shootings, stabbings and car-rammings.

In June, Auschwitz-born Montrealer Angela Orosz-Richt told former SS guard Oskar Groening at his trial in Germany that she can never forgive him. Groening was sentenced to four years in prison for his role in murdering 300,000 Hungarian Jews in the camp.

On issues of identity and education, *The CJN* took a deeper look at camps' role in fostering Jewish affiliation and day schools' struggles to attract students as tuition fees rise inexorably.

In the most interesting of these stories, Tyler Weir, 13, of Richmond Hill, Ont., was barred from Camp Solelim, a Young Judaea camp in Sudbury, because he's not Jewish. He'd attended Camp Shalom, a Solelim feeder camp, in 2014. The story touched off a debate in the Jewish community and beyond. Some argued the camp made a PR blunder in rejecting Tyler, while others defended the camp's faith-based mission to inculcate Jewish values among teens at a key age.

Other notable stories from 2015:

• In March, *The CJN* uncovered online real estate ads for houses in Brampton, Ont., with the tagline, "You don't have to be Jewish to buy this house." The agent named in the ads said a third party posted them and he didn't know the slogan had been used. When contacted, the Philippines-based firm that wrote the ads said it wasn't anti-Jewish and blamed the error on a new hire who innocently thought "Jewish" means "rich."

• In June, B'nai Brith Canada said it plans to sell its Toronto headquarters. A short time later, it began seeking a buyer for its dementia residence in the city. The home opened in 2013, but has never been more than half full. B'nai Brith's financial situation is a story we'll be watching in 2016.

• Also in June, the Jewish National Fund of Canada cancelled former Arkansas governor and U.S. Republican presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee's keynote address at JNF Ottawa's Oct. 15 Negev Diner after objections about his comments on gays and lesbians.

•In late spring, we reported on a scaled-down plan to rebuild Toronto's Bathurst Jewish Community Centre. In 2007, before the recession, the new facility was forecast to cost $100 million. The revised smaller project will cost $65 million and construction won't start for two more years, community officials said.

• In August, Steve Maman, the Montreal businessman who gained global attention for claims he was rescuing Christian and Yazidi women and girls from ISIS, said he was suing Yazidi leaders and others who demanded he prove his claims. He said he'd crowd-funded more than $387,000 and negotiated to free more than 120 captives.

• After a long-simmering debate, the 16-member choir at Beth Tzedec Congregation, North America's largest Conservative shul, resigned en masse this month when the synagogue demanded that every member of the group, comprising Jews and non-Jews, affirm their Jewish identities. Spiritual leader Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl said the change to the membership requirements is in line with Conservative practice. ■

Popular stories on cjnews.com

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Laffa, however, is a rather recent addition, thanks in part to Dr. Laffa, which introduced many of us to the thick flatbread that's giving pita bread a run for its money. In July, patrons noticed that two doors down from Dr. Laffa's Bathurst Street and Lawrence Avenue location stood a new laffa eatery, Famous Laffa. *The CJN* learned that the partners who owned the former, Yoram Gabay and Sason (Sasi) Haba, had actually split up over legal issues.

Stamp features rabbi, imam, bishop

In a year plagued with Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, stories that highlighted people working together to foster a united religious front were scarce, and *CJN* readers relished the opportunity to learn about a forthcoming new stamp in Belgium adorned with the faces of the country's Chief Rabbi Albert Guigui, Imam Khalid Benhaddou and the Bishop of Antwerp Johan Bonny.

Former CHAT teacher killed

Since the recent wave of violence against Israeli civilians began more than three months ago, each assault has touched us all deeply, though none hit as close to home as the death of Rabbi Ya'acov Don, who spent four years in Toronto as a Jewish studies teacher. Rabbi Don, along with two others, was killed on Nov. 19, when a Palestinian opened fire on cars near the West Bank settlement of Alon Shvut. Torontonians mourned him through heartfelt tributes, including a former colleague who told *The CJN* that "his passion for Israel was contagious, and he had a real influence on students and staff."

Disabled teen's SickKids bar mitzvah

CJN readers were moved by the touching story of Jacob Trossman, the first-ever 13-year-old to celebrate his bar mitzvah at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, spiritual leader of Beth Tzedec Congregation, called Jacob's simchah an example of the importance of promoting an inclusive Jewish community.

Canada votes against UN resolutions

For Canadian Jews, the election was undoubtedly the most widely discussed event of the year. Conservatives and Liberals came out with political guns blazing, with Conservatives claiming that Trudeau would not maintain Stephen Harper's staunch support for the Jewish state. Since taking office, Trudeau has silenced his critics (for now), after his government voted against a raft of Arab-sponsored UN resolutions targeting the Jewish state. Canada voted against all of the six resolutions adopted.

Actress strikes it rich in Netflix

Twenty-one-year-old Brooke Wexler is something of a local hero, after Netflix cast her to play a robot maid in a live-action TV adaptation of celebrated comic book character Richie Rich. *The CJN* spoke to Wexler about the series, which she described as fun for the whole family.

10 best Jewish Instagram accounts

With over 400 million active users, Instagram has proven the most popular social media platform after Facebook. Naturally, there is a wide array of Jewish-themed accounts focusing on anything from quirky Jewish memes to delectable kosher foods. After scouring the depths of the photo-sharing app, *The CJN* found 10 Jewish accounts deserving of praise, most of which will likely inspire laughter or awaken your appetite for lox and cream cheese bagels.

On the niqab, where are the Jews?

The CJN published several articles on the niqab debate prominently included on the Canadian election trail, but none struck a chord with readers as much as Danielle Kubes' piece likening Zunera Ishaq's struggle to wear a niqab during her citizenship ceremony to a legislator who was kicked out of Parliament in 1808 after displaying his Jewish faith. "When we support Ishaq's freedom, we support our own. And if we do not fight for Ishaq, who will be left to fight for us?" Kubes asked, a question that several *CJN* readers answered. "Speaking as a Jewish woman, I feel that we should stand up for our Muslim sisters," one Facebook user wrote. ■

INTERNATIONAL

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Shin Bet lashes out at Jewish terror groups

JUDAH ARI GROSS
JERUSALEM

A young Jewish settler suspected of burning a house in Sinjil, a village in the West Bank, northeast of Ramallah in 2013 is escorted by police in the Magistrate's Court in Jerusalem. FLASH90 PHOTO

The usually taciturn Shin Bet security service lashed out against Jewish terror organizations on Dec. 17, saying the groups display "extremist, anti-Zionist ideology" and bear responsibility for the current unrest in Israel and the West Bank.

In recent weeks, the Shin Bet and police have arrested a number of far-right Jewish Israelis believed to be members of one such extremist Jewish group, under the suspicion that they carried out "grave terror attacks," the Shin Bet said in a statement, referring specifically to the killing of three members of the Dawabsha family in a firebombing attack this summer.

"These terror attacks, which are suspected of having been carried out by the organization, led to the murder of three innocent Palestinians, which destabilized the area and negatively influenced the security situation," the Shin Bet said.

Eighteen-month-old Ali Saad Dawabsha and his parents were killed in the firebombing of their home in the Palestinian village of Duma on July 31. The couple's then-four-year-old son was the sole survivor of his immediate family.

A Star of David and the words "revenge" and "long live the messiah" were also spray-painted on a wall near the family's small house.

Since the deadly attack, Palestinians have often highlighted the firebombing and lack of progress in the case as one of the causes of the ongoing wave of knife, gun and car-ramming attacks targeting Israelis that has swept through the country since mid-September.

The Shin Bet accused the suspects of using "violent means to bring about a change in the government in the State of Israel."

Earlier in the day, the suspects' attorneys accused the Shin Bet of "outrageous physical violence" against their clients.

"The Shin Bet investigators are allowing themselves to abuse and strike the youth. I understand that the investigators want to arrive at their goal, but there's a limit," the lawyers, all from the Honenu organization, which principally handles cases of Israelis accused of nationalistic crimes, said during a press conference.

The Shin Bet, however, claimed in a statement that the suspects were not tortured, but were rather "interrogated in an intensive way with regards to the suspicions against them."

The groups, which often do not recognize the authority of the Israeli government and army, have been blamed for both serious violence, as with the Dawabsha killings, and petty vandalism against Palestinians, Christian holy sites and Israeli military property.

News broke earlier this month about the arrests of several Jewish extremists, following widespread rumours of a "dramatic development" in a major case, though most of the information related to the case, including the identities of the suspects, remains under an official gag order.

This week, Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon told Army Radio that security services knew who carried out the attack, "but we do not have enough proof yet to try them."

Right-wing figures have come out harshly against the Shin Bet and other legal authorities for their investigation.

Jewish Home party Knesset member Bezalel Smotrich even denied that the murder of the three Dawabsha family members was a terror attack, saying in a newspaper column that attacks by Jewish youths were "serious crimes," which may be nationalistically motivated, but should not be equated with attacks by Palestinians.

Apparently referring to the Duma investigation, the ultra-conservative lawmaker further claimed the Shin Bet had "crossed all red lines" in apparent regard to the Duma investigation. Smotrich even appeared to break a gag order on the probe, referring to specific suspects that had been taken in for questioning.

Joining Smotrich, the leader of the anti-Arab Lehava organization, Bentzi Gopstein, denounced the Shin Bet in a tweet for "the harsh tortures" that suspects in the case were subjected to. Gopstein also broke the gag order, revealing the age of one of the suspects.

"We are sending a message to these youth that they are the enemy. What a shame. It will only lead to difficult things, unfortunately. Someone mature and responsible is needed to calm down the Shin Bet," he wrote.

Those condemnations of the Shin Bet, from both official figures like Smotrich and fringe radicals like Gopstein, did not go unnoticed by the security service.

"Unfortunately, since carrying out the arrests, the Shin Bet has recognized a proactive and ongoing effort whose goal is to slander the agency and its workers, and disrupt our operational activities," the security service said.

"This attempt deserves all manner of condemnation and will not weaken the hands of the Shin Bet going forward in its actions, as it fights for the citizens of Israel under our national values," the Shin Bet said. ■

Time Of Israel
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OPINION

Resilient Israelis starting to bounce back

Yair Lootsteen

December is my favourite time of year. Chanukah is a great family holiday and the weather is cool. In Jerusalem, where I live, evenings can be downright cold. Stone-tiled floors, laid with our summers in mind, make for extra indoor heating challenges.

Between much needed rainy periods, the warm sunny days are splendid. I don't know why, but when it finally comes down, it doesn't just rain here, it literally pours, the torrents cleansing our streets of the grime that accumulates during a half year or more with no precipitation.

And nature, being nature, takes its path. Rain and sunshine set a metamorphosis in motion. Dry, dull and yellowing, end of summer flora is supplanted by revitalizing green vegetation.

We're told by weather forecasters – a non-prophet livelihood if there ever was one – that precipitation this winter will be just above average. Till now, central and southern regions of the country have received rainfall above average for this time of year, but the north, with the Sea of Galilee and other important reservoirs still to be filled, is well below the standard, although we have till mid-March to catch up, and those prophets say we might.

You must be thinking: "Why is he writing about this when so many security related dramas and tragedies are taking place where he lives? Daily stabbings, shootings, pedestrians run over by terrorists. Doesn't he have something better, more important to write about?"

That's just the point. We Israelis are a resilient people. No, there's no remarkably good news yet. Peace is not upon us. The terrorism we're experiencing will continue. Not enough tourists; businesses still suffering. The rift between right and left continues to broaden and expand.

And while I'm not certain it's something we can pride ourselves on, or rather another force of nature, human nature, once again we seem to be bouncing back. Just a bit. I feel it in my own surroundings. Kids, including my 15-year-old, taking buses again. People sequestering themselves less in their homes. On the fifth night of Chanukah, I joined hundreds at a wonderfully hopeful candle-lighting ceremony at Jerusalem's First Railway Station complex. Each candle lit by Jews together with Arabs, Christians and Muslims. Men and women. Young people and adults. Music. East meeting West.

During my workout the other day on the Haas Promenade overlooking the Old City from the south, I was delighted to see large groups of tourists. Two, in particular. Christian visitors from Nigeria colourfully decked out. Another from Indonesia. Women covered in hijabs. Men donning traditional head coverings. Muslims. Having their photos taken with an incredible backdrop. Can you believe it? Nearly 30,000 Indonesians – yes 30,000 – visited Israel in each of the past few years, and we don't even have official relations with that most populated of Muslim nations.

And with all the talk of boycotting, divesting and sanctioning Israel, it's refreshing to see it's not really working. At least not yet. On Dec. 11, FIBA, the international basketball federation, announced that Israel will be one of four venues to host the 2017 EuroBasket championships, and earlier this month, Netanya hosted the 2015 European Short Course Swimming Championships, where we won three medals – two silvers and a bronze. Look for swimmers Yakov Toumarkin and Gal Nevo at the Rio Olympics next summer, along with our world class judokas and windsurfers.

Back to winter. For as long as I can remember, Israelis have been following daily reports of rainfall levels, anticipating drier days and ominous water shortages. No more. With Israel's desalination capabilities soon to reach 70 per cent of our domestic consumption needs, dependence on rainwater has greatly declined.

Witnessing these water concerns recede, we can now more easily enjoy the cleansing, transformative effects rain has on our surroundings.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to find a similar elixir to purify us of our even more existential woes? Despite this season's vitality, I'm afraid neither man nor metaphysical will comes up with that potion any time soon. ■

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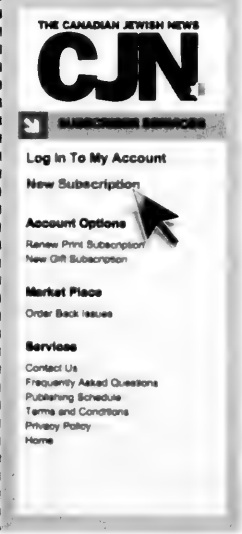


ANALYSIS

The demise of the PA is only a matter of time

Avi Issacharoff
JERUSALEM

Young Palestinian protesters throw stones at Israeli security forces (not seen), during clashes at the Hawara checkpoint, south of the West Bank city of Nablus, on Oct. 11. Nablus has been a flashpoint for violence. FLASH90 PHOTO

Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas tried last week to explain the motives behind the unprecedented phenomenon – referred to by many as the "third intifadah" – that we have been witnessing over the past 2-1/2 months.

To date, more than 130 terrorists have taken part in attacks or attempted attacks against Israeli targets. If you add the number of terrorists who have carried out attacks to those who were arrested pre-emptively by the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli security services, you get to a quick estimate of around 200 to 250 Palestinians who were ready to die in order to kill Jews – in the short period of 75 days.

This works out to a rough average of around three terrorists a day – a figure that is both unimaginable and deeply dangerous. Abbas has claimed that despair about the Israeli occupation and the dashed prospects of a two-state solution brought these youngsters to do what they did; Israel blames incitement.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rushed to attack Abbas last week and quoted surveys carried out in the West Bank that show the Palestinian public's opposition to a two-state solution. He did not note that the PA itself prevents attacks of all kinds against Israelis almost every day.

The problem is that neither Abbas' explanation ("the occupation") nor Netanyahu's ("the incitement") fully sheds light on this sick phenomenon. It may also be that through our western eyes, we can never really understand how hundreds of youngsters are willing to die without a second thought in order to stab Israelis.

Taha Katnani, the father of Ashrakat, a 16-year-old terrorist who last month tried to stab Jewish passersby at the Hawara checkpoint near Nablus (she was run over by Gershon Mesika, who was passing by chance, and then shot dead by security forces), is a known figure in the Islamic Jihad terror group. In recent years, he's been the imam of one of the mosques in the Askar refugee camp on the outskirts of Nablus.

In an interview with a Palestinian TV station identified with Islamic Jihad, he said that his daughter had told him before she died that in the event she was killed ("martyred"), "if the occupiers try to barter with my body, don't agree to it."

He went on to describe a subsequent meeting he had with Israeli security officials at Hawara. "They tried to understand if there had been a crisis, if she had been in a crisis, or I had, or [Aunt] Yassin… In other words, they tried to understand the motive.

"But the occupiers don't understand," the father added, tearfully. "They're deluded. Ashrakat lived in her home, with a high standard of living, doing what she wanted. Whoever knows us – everyone knows the warm relations between my self and my children. Everyone is moved when they see my approach and my relationship with them."

In short, Ashrakat presumably grew up in a home and an environment profoundly hostile to Israel, but did not have family or psychological problems.

Many commentators had warned of a blowup, but none of them predicted the way this "third intifadah" would develop. Certainly not the Israeli political echelon, which continues to exist in its bubble, waiting for the storm to pass – and it is refusing to pass. The withholding of terrorists' bodies, and the threat to destroy their families' homes, are supposed to prevent the next terror attack. But these techniques don't stand up to the reality test.

The flood of attacks isn't letting up for a moment. It's emphatically not always related to family crises, or to what emerges as a psychological problem. It is at least partly an expression of despair and frustration, as Abbas said, but it also relates to the PA and all the Palestinian factions, and even to the older generation in general, which has disappointed the younger generation.

A large majority of the attackers have not belonged to any kind of organization, were not known to the security services, and had not received an order to carry out their attack.

Most of these young people come from the Palestinian cities, some are more religious and some less, most are single. They are not simply fed incitement from the social networks, and certainly not only from the PA's official media networks. They also get their hatred almost intravenously, in the Internet cafes, the mosques, the billiard clubs, from the family – in almost every place.

And for such a phenomenon, it's difficult to find one single convincing explanation – or a solution that will stop the epidemic.

On the Israeli side, there is no credible plan for calming the tensions. During a meeting between senior Israeli and Palestinian security personnel, the Palestinians demanded a "political road map" that they argued would bring about calm on the streets. The Israelis demanded that the PA first stop the violence.

Dramatic political moves may be essential to achieve long-term calm. But what are the Palestinians demanding within the framework of a "road map" ahead? A freeze in settlement building and an agreement in principle to negotiate on the basis of creating a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. These are unrealistic in light of the current coalition makeup in Israel and the policy of the person at its head. It's an impasse: the PA isn't capable of calming the street without dramatic political steps that Israel has no intention of taking.

What does this say for the PA and Abbas? That in all likelihood, they're living on borrowed time. Or, as a senior figure from the Authority said in his office in Ramallah, "The game is over." Does this mean the dismantling or crumbling of the PA in the near future? It seems so.

Security co-operation is wearing thinner with each passing day – after each Palestinian terror attack and each Israeli security operation in the field (such as the operation Dec. 15 in the village of Qalandiya, during which Israeli forces looking for terrorists killed two Palestinians who, in separate incidents, tried to ram their cars into Israeli soldiers). It's like a countdown whose end is hard to predict but that will clearly stop at some point. Thus the demise of the PA is a question of when, not if.

On the Palestinian side, too, there are also no real plans.

There has been much talk in recent weeks about the PLO committee that is supposed to convene to discuss halting security and economic co-ordination with Israel. Will Abbas gather the PLO leadership by the end of the year and lead it to a dramatic about-face decision on relations with Israel or security co-operation? In the run-up to the next Fatah Day on Jan. 1, commemorating the anniversary of Fatah's first terrorist attack against Israel in 1965, senior figures from the movement will doubtless try to take a step of one kind or another to bring Fatah and the Palestinian agenda back to the global forefront.

Saeb Erekat, general secretary of the PLO, has been scattering threats right and left in recent days, talking repeatedly about cancelling the recognition of Israel and the Oslo accords.

It's not clear whether this will happen. But it has to be said that many of Erekat's unsuccessful recommendations over the past year – e.g., joining the International Criminal Court in The Hague last year, on the anniversary of Fatah's founding – were warmly received by the president. ■

The Times of Israel
Thetimesofisrael.com

Medics told to treat attackers the same as victims

STUART WINER
JERUSALEM

Medics at terror sites must treat the wounded according to the severity of their injuries, even if that means helping an attacker before his victims, the Israeli Medical Association (IMA) said in rules published last week.

The new rules, formulated by the IMA's Ethics Bureau, replace an earlier directive based on the principle of "charity begins at home," which enabled medical professionals to treat victims first, the Hebrew-language *Israel Hayom* newspaper reported Dec. 16.

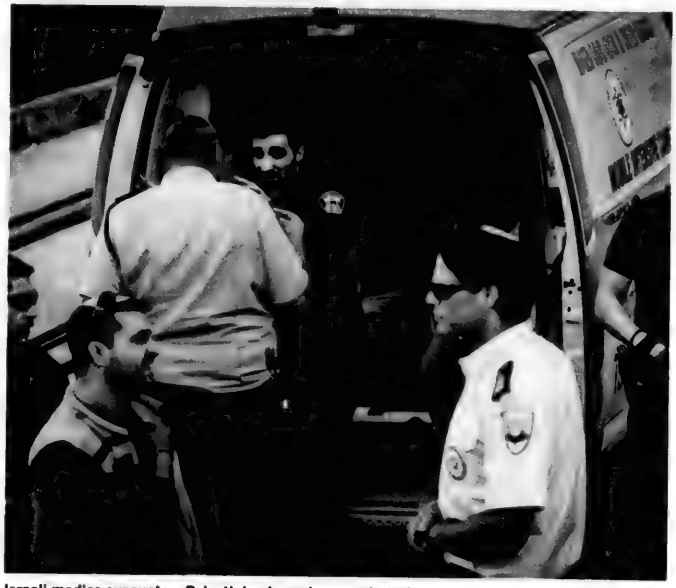
The decision to change the directive was made during a heated meeting last week held at the request of Physicians for Human Rights, which appealed to the bureau, claiming the previous rules contradicted accepted medical ethics and international humanitarian laws.

Senior doctors in the IMA told *Israel Hayom* that the change in guidelines was not publicly announced for fear of a political backlash amid almost daily Palestinian attacks for the past three months.

While Israeli doctors and medical staff see it as an ethical duty to attend to the injuries of terrorists and treat them the same as victims, until the recent change they could give priority when doing triage to victims rather than perpetrators.

Tammy Karni, who heads the ethics panel, said the previous rules required doctors to verify who was an attacker and who was a victim, a sometimes impossible task.

"Doctors are not judges. The implication of leaving the [previous] directive was that the doctor needs to investigate who was responsible and punish him by not giving him treatment," she told *Israel Hayom*.



Israeli medics evacuate a Palestinian boy who was shot after stabbing an Israeli security guard on the Jerusalem light rail train in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Pisgat Ze'ev last month. MUAMMAR AWAD/FLASH90 PHOTO

According to the report, the Ethics Bureau is the only body that decides ethical standards for Israeli medical staff and its rulings apply to doctors, paramedics, emergency services and nurses.

There have been a number of cases of innocent people being attacked amid the chaos in the aftermath of a terror attack. In October, an Eritrean national was mistakenly shot, beaten and only later attended to after a terror attack in Be'er Sheva. Doctors said the delay may have contributed to his death.

Palestinians have alleged that Israeli medics often ignore wounded assailants after attacks, which sometimes leads to their deaths.

The "charity begins at home" rule was laid down in 2008 by a group of doctors in the Ethics Bureau, including Pini Halperin, director of Emergency Medicine at Ichilov Hopsital in Tel Aviv, who lamented the change in orders.

"If there is, for example, a decision of life or death for the casualties, it is appropriate to first treat 'what matters to me,' that is to say the victims of terror, Jews and Arabs alike – and only after the enemy who is carrying out a terror attack," he told *Israel Hayom*.

Halperin added that the Ethics Bureau should instead have clarified the terms of the "charity begins at home" rule according to the rules for dealing with enemy forces rather than cancelling it altogether.

Leader of the Yisrael Beytenu party MK Avigdor Liberman slammed what he called a "disgraceful decision."

"This is a non-humanitarian decision, that testifies that those who made it simply don't live in reality," he wrote on his Facebook page. "Doctors must rise up against this decision and change it."

More than 20 Israelis have been killed in three months of near-daily stabbing, shooting, and car-ramming terror attacks by Palestinians targeting civilians and security forces.

More than 100 Palestinians have also been killed, a large proportion of them assailants shot as they carried out attacks, including some who were teenagers.

Other Palestinians have been killed during violent clashes with Israeli security forces. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

Secret talks aimed at improved Turkish-Israeli relations

RAPHAEL AHREN
JERUSALEM

Turkish-Israeli relations may be on the verge of a dramatic improvement after years of disconnect, following a secret meeting Dec. 16 in Switzerland between senior Turkish and Israeli officials.

Among those attending the talks in Zurich, an official at the Prime Minister's Office said, were National Security Council chief Yossi Cohen (the incoming head of the Mossad spy agency), former foreign ministry director Joseph Ciechanover (who serves as Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's point man on Israeli-Turkish relations), and Feridun Sinirlioglu, the current director-general of the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

Understandings reached at the talks are intended to serve as the basis for an agreement on warmer ties, which was expected to be signed by the end of the year.

The agreement was reached days after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan indicated that he would like to see bilateral ties revived.

Relations between Jerusalem and Ankara broke down after the Israeli Navy intercepted a flotilla led by the Mavi Marmara, which was seeking to breach Israel's security blockage on Hamas-run Gaza, in May 2010. The Israeli raid ended with nine dead Turkish activists and dozens wounded, after the naval commandos were attacked with clubs and poles as they boarded the vessel.

Tension between the countries, already high, escalated further, and Erdogan, then the prime minister, recalled his ambassador. Israel recalled its own ambassador in retaliation and Turkey also began legal proceedings against senior IDF officials, including then-IDF chief of staff Gabi Ashkenazi and then-Navy commander Eliezer Marom.

In 2013, U.S. President Barack Obama brokered an Israeli apology to Ankara, but hopes for a return to full normalization were not realized.

According to the PMO official, the agreement is to provide for both countries returning their ambassadors; a cancellation of pending lawsuits against IDF soldiers; the establishment by Israel of a fund for the welfare of victims of the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident; a Turkish commitment not to tolerate any "terrorist activities" on its sovereign territory; Turkey barring from its soil Salah Arouri, a Hamas operative who allegedly orchestrated the kidnapping and killing of three Israeli teens in the West Bank in June 2014; Turkey allowing Israel to lay down a gas pipeline on its soil; and the opening of immediate negotiations on the sale of natural gas from Israel to Turkey.

Foreign Ministry director-general Dore Gold already held secret meetings with his counterpart Sinirlioglu and other senior Turkish officials in June, in what many observers saw as a first sign of a pending thaw in bilateral ties. ■

Times of Israel
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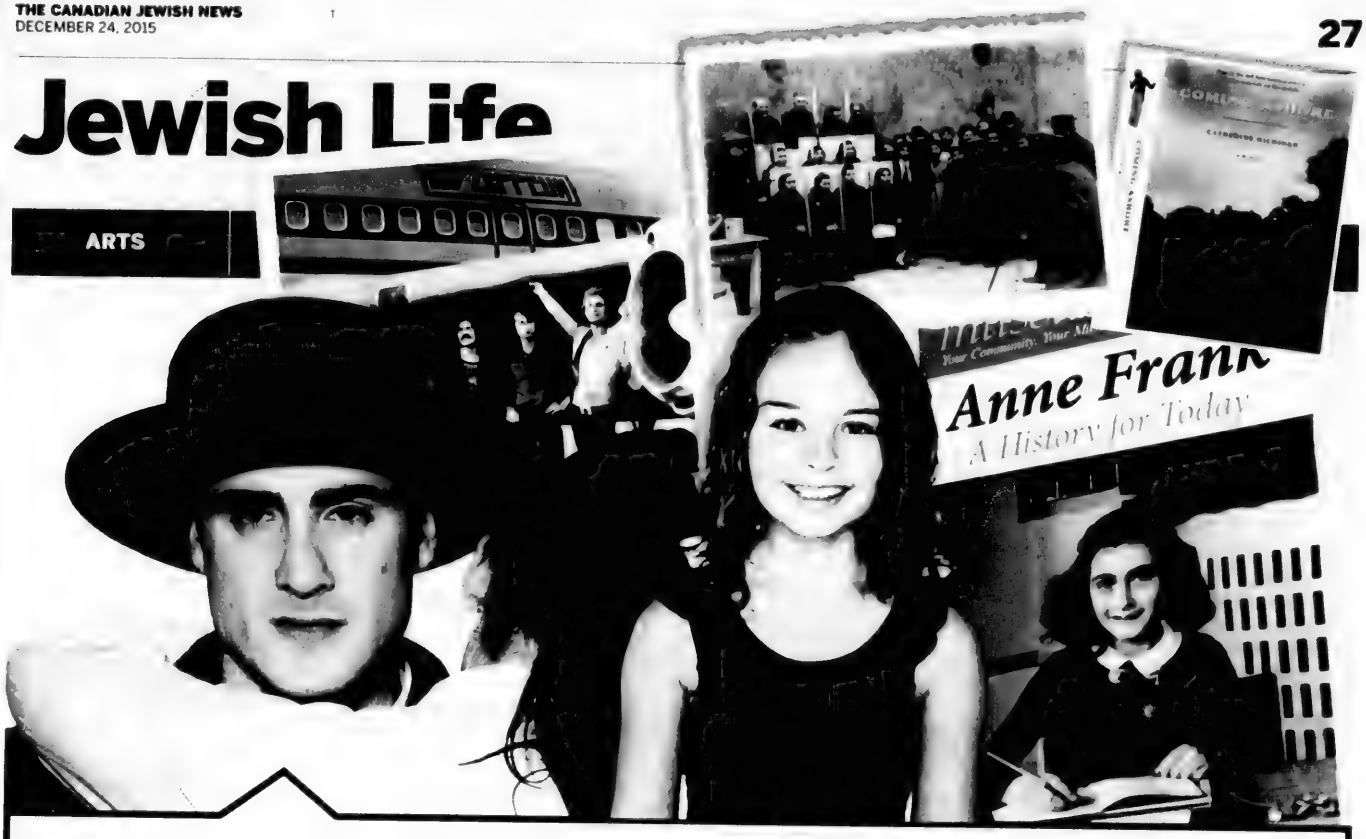
Jewish Life

ARTS



Looking back at the year that was

JOSEPH SERGE
jserge@thecjn.ca

The Jewish Life section of the paper is a moniker we came up with to compartmentalize what in the publishing industry is often referred to as the "back of the book." In *The CJN*, this section is made up primarily of arts stories, but also contains book reviews, food stories, sports on occasion and the Social Scene and Backstory columns. **Here are some of the highlights of 2015:**

Arts:

On Jan. 26, Art Spiegelman, the storied cartoonist and creator of *Maus*, gave a lecture in Toronto discussing comics, free speech, his Jewish sensibilities and, in the wake of the *Charlie Hebdo* massacres, how perilous a craft cartooning can be. **Ron Csillag** covered the event for the Feb. 5 issue.

The images captured by the little Leica camera that Henryk Ross carried around the Lodz Ghetto from 1940 to 1944 may be black and white, but the stories they tell are vivid, beyond the iconic views of the Holocaust. So wrote **Toby Saltzman** in her Feb. 12 story about *Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross*, an exhibit that ran at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO).

It was fun to read **Susan Minuk's** Feb. 19 piece about Abby and Sarah Ginsburg. The pair of Toronto twins had flown to Los Angeles to perform Jason Mraz's song *I'm Yours* for Ellen DeGeneres on *The Ellen Show*.

Who can resist the allure of nine-year-old Skyler Wexler? The young actor is becoming a big player in sci-fi and horror flicks. She had a role as the young Carrie, in the recent remake of the Stephen King book, but most viewers might recognize her from her recurring role in the TV thriller *Orphan Black*, where she plays Kira, the daughter of one of the clones. **Minuk** sat down with her for our March 26 edition.

We'd written about actor Jake Epstein before, but I was fascinated to learn he was collaborating with his mother, Kathy Kacer, writer of such popular young reader Holocaust novels as *Gabi's Dresser*. **Kathryn Kates** wrote about how the two worked on a play, *Therefore Choose Life*, which premiered in Toronto on April 18.

We cover art stories of all forms, of course, but some seem especially unique. **Jodie Shupac's** May 14 piece on *Ballad of the Burning Star*, a one-man cabaret-style drag show that ran at The Theatre Centre in May was quite illuminating.

With the Stratford Festival running a production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the co-ordinator of Canadian Projects for Anne Frank House Amsterdam thought this would be a good time to host the exhibit *Anne Frank: A History for Today*. In her June 18 preview, **Saltzman** wrote about how Julie Couture was smitten by the farmhouse that became the Stratford Perth Museum, as the place to host this exhibit.

We don't get to cover classic rock much in these pages, and I was delighted last June to assign **Ruth Schweitzer** a July 2 story on Bob Gruen, the photographer who took iconic pictures of John Lennon, Led Zeppelin and Alice Cooper, among others.

It took Winnipeg filmmakers Daniel Eskin and Trevor Mowchun more than 10 years to finish their first feature, *World to Come*. Based on events surrounding an abuse allegation scandal that rocked Winnipeg's Jewish community in the late 1980s and 1990s, the film premiered at the AGO on July 11. **Jordan Adler** wrote about it in our July 9 edition.

Like it or not, we've all had our ears filled with *Let It Go*, the hit song from the film *Frozen*. Thus it was a highlight for us on Aug. 20 to run **Marvin Glassman's** interview with the ubiquitous song's singer Idina Menzel prior to her Canadian concerts.

To commemorate Frank Sinatra's birthday, **Schweitzer** wrote a thoughtful piece in our Dec. 10 edition about Ruth Lowe, the Toronto songwriter who launched the American popular singer's career.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The best stories of the year

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Although *The CJN* misses **Bill Gladstone's** Eye on Arts column (the last of which ran in August) it was good to welcome several new columnists into the back pages. **Chaimie and Leizer** of YidLife Crisis' Dec. 3 spoof on the greatest Chanukah film never told was a fun read. **Evelyn Tauben hit the nail on the head with her insightful** Oct. 29 piece on how, over the course of history, forms, colours and symbols have gathered a potent meaning, and consequently we need to absorb imagery with a sensitive eye.

Food:

In the Feb. 5 paper, **Shupac** met with celebrity chef Susur Lee and Modern Kosher Catering owner Moishe Brown. The two discussed their creation of an exclusive line of kosher, Susur Lee-branded food, to be added to Modern Kosher's existing list of menu options.

Books:

In the Jan. 8 *CJN*, I was thrilled to review the last part of Catherine Gildiner's memoir trilogy, *Coming Ashore*. I'd been following the series for several years. In this one, the Toronto psychiatrist discusses her hippy days, describing encounters with a young Bill Clinton and Jimi Hendrix, and her time at Toronto's notorious Rochdale College.

Other book reviews we ran, which I didn't write but enjoyed reading, were **Mordechai Ben-Dat's** analysis of David Liss' *The Day of Atonement* (Feb. 5), and his review of Charles Belfoure's *The Paris Architect* (June 11); **Gladstone's** look at Yuval Noah Harari's *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (Feb. 26) and *Catch the Jew* by Tuvia Tenenbom (Aug. 13); **Norm Ravvin's** take on *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr (May 14); and **Martin Lockshin's** look at *The Jewish Dog* by Asher Kravitz (July 30).

Sports:

With the PanAm Games held in Toronto this summer, we profiled most of the Jewish athletes involved. Of particular interest to me were the pair of rhythmic gymnastics twins Anjelika and Victoria Reznik. **Alan Hudes** profiled them in our July 9 edition, before the twins went on to win medals.

Backstory:

I enjoy reading Backstory for its unique look at sometimes obscure events in Jewish history. **Gladstone's** April 23 piece about Rev. Shabetai Benjamin Rohold, the son of the chief rabbi of Jerusalem, who became a missionary Jew in Toronto in the pre-World War I era, was very informative.

On Feb. 26, **Elran Harris** wrote an interesting column about Emerson Swift Mahon, Canada's first black Jew. After coming to Canada in 1912 and converting to Judaism, he seriously considered becoming a rabbi at one point.

Social Scene:

I love reading **David Levine's** Wry Bread column each month, but some hit the spot for me more than others. I particularly liked his April 30 piece on GCGs Genuinely Curious Gentiles. "Can you spot the GCCs in your life? Use the real-life examples below to practise." The July 30 piece on Donald Trump was also hilarious – and still topical. And who can forget his Aug. 27 take on paying shul dues? ■

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The Enlightenment as seen through a woman's writings

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Haskalah (Enlightenment) of the mid-19th century was like a deluge washing across the Jews of Europe, sundering centuries of strict traditionalism, social seclusion and intellectual constraints.

Some Jews, swept up by the new, heady sense of openness and putative freedoms, severed the roots of their past and soon washed away from their people. Some planted their traditions even deeper into the soil of the ancient ways, seeking security in calcifying clay that they believed protected them from change.

Most Jews however, tried to absorb the torrent's strong, creative force to attach and adapt modern ways onto their traditions and sense of peoplehood. They did not always succeed in creating a sheltering structure: some found sanctuary in the new hybrid way of life, while others became estranged.

It was in the world of culture, letters and the arts that the Jews' struggles to find their way and their compromise with modernity was most evident. And it was in the myriad journalistic publications among the Jews of Europe at this time – newspapers, pamphlets and magazines – that their struggles found voice.

In a masterful essay titled *The Silenced Voice of a People*, published in the landmark work *The Jewish Press that Was (1975)*, the late Israeli editor and journalist Yehuda Gotthelf noted that the world of Jewish media in Europe came alive during the Haskalah. It was a time when all of European culture, it seemed, underwent an intensive intellectual ferment.

In Gotthelf's words: "Despite stress and poverty, there sprang up in those days hundreds of associations, clubs, libraries and political parties, and on top of them all – a Jewish press. The world between the two world wars was beset by a feverish ideological and public awakening: hopes kindled by the Balfour Declaration, disappointments generated by the violent, political upheavals in Russia, and the many isms that attracted Jews of all kinds – Bundism, Socialism and Zionism."

Toward the end of the 19th century, but especially between the two world wars, Jewish life experienced a cultural outpouring of energy, daring and self-assertion. The Jewish newspaper was, in many respects, the key manifestation of that effusion.

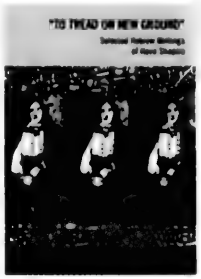
Jewish newspapers were printed throughout Europe in the local languages, in Hebrew – the language that was just then being revived – and in the language most spoken among the Jews of continental Europe: Yiddish.

Records at the academic institution YIVO, the Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut, established in 1925 and now headquartered in New York, show that before World War II, there were some 230 Yiddish-language periodicals in Poland alone. Twenty-seven were dailies, 100 weeklies, 24 bi-weeklies and 58 monthlies.

A Jewish periodical could be found in almost every town in Poland where Jews lived. At one point, there were five daily Jewish newspapers in Warsaw alone. Jewish journalists in Europe even had their own professional association. Its premises at 13 Tlomackie St. in Warsaw were known throughout the Jewish and non-Jewish world of journalism as an exciting centre of discussion and debate.

The Jewish press was vibrant all through Europe – in the then-Soviet Union, the Baltic countries, Lithuania, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Salonika and Scandinavia. More than 800 Jewish newspapers existed in Europe before the outbreak of World War II.

Professors Carole Balin and Wendy Zierler, both at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York College, combine their expertise in Jewish history and in Jewish literature and feminist studies respectively, to provide a new, unique, powerful insight into the vanished Jewish life and Jewish press of Europe.



***To Tread on New Ground: Selected Hebrew Writings of Hava Shapiro**, edited by Carole B. Balin and Wendy Zierler (Wayne State University Press, 2014)*

The lens through which they shine that view is the mostly unknown life of Hava Shapiro, a *maskilah* (student of the Enlightenment), Zionist activist, journalist, literary critic, short story writer and diarist who wrote entirely in Hebrew.

Like many of her contemporaries who were at that time pioneering their lives in Mandatory Palestine, Shapiro was a bold and innovative pioneer planting seeds in the newly flowering soil of Hebrew literature in Europe.

Balin and Zierler are effusive in their assessment of Shapiro's significance for the modern reader. "That a woman was regularly writing good, readable Hebrew prose in the Diaspora in the early 20th century is notable in and of itself. Equally significant, however, is the historical content of Shapiro's writing. As one would expect of an Eastern European whose life spanned 1878 to 1943, Shapiro bumped up against cataclysmic world events and thus chronicled publicly in the press, and privately in her diary and letters, the Russian Revolution and both world wars as well as critical episodes in the Jews' past, including pogroms, mass migration, ruptures in traditional Jewish life and the development of Zionism."

One of the many strengths of the book is its organization. Balin and Zierler have compartmentalized Shapiro's writings into four categories: Fiction; The Diary 1900-1941; Letters; Reportage, Literary Criticism and Essays. They add a fifth section comprised of essays about Shapiro. At the beginning of each of the different sections, Balin and Zierler provide extensive commentary about the material they have gathered. These introductory mini-essays by the editors are impressively substantive and informative. But the diadem in the crown of this work is the eclectically diverse, compelling, poignant, moving writing of Hava Shapiro.

The light of notoriety and celebrity shone very little upon Shapiro during her life. Even during the Enlightenment, male writers cast too long a shadow for equally skilled and talented women writers such as Shapiro to be noticed.

Shapiro often wrote under the pseudonym *Eim Kol Hai* (Mother of All Living), a play upon her name Hava, which is the biblical name of the first woman, Eve.

Balin and Zierler provide a moving explanation for this: "Shapiro regarded her perspective – namely a woman's perspective – as critical to the birthing process of modern Hebrew literature… In the case of the modern *Eim Kol Hai*, it is she, Shapiro, who casts herself as a partner to the male progenitors of modern Hebrew literature and urges them in the strongest terms possible to consider and embrace her viewpoint."

The Holocaust took Shapiro's life. Thanks to Balin and Zierler, today, more than 70 years later, we can still hear her voice. ■

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A dark imagining of concentration camp life

DANIEL HOROWITZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Few Holocaust films successfully reconcile their duty – and inability – to realize the atrocities of the concentration camps. Even fewer manage to capture the darkest imaginings of our macabre curiosities. *Son of Saul* is the closest I've seen to accomplish this, perhaps closer than I'm comfortable, or qualified, admitting.

It is October 1944, and Auschwitz-Birkenau is at the height of its operating efficiency. The titular Saul, played by Géza Rohrig, is a member of the *sonderkommando*, work details of Jewish prisoners.

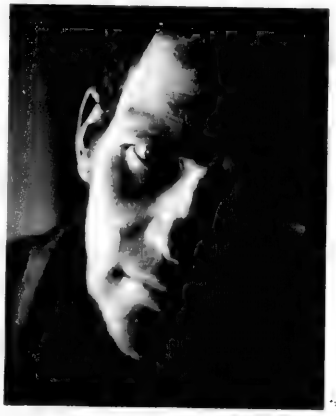
The film's opening scene is a brutal introduction to their daily life. After Saul escorts unsuspecting transports of Jews and other "undesirables" to their deaths in the gas chamber, their screams and battering against the door reaches an unbearable climax of sound. Even though it's off-screen, the panic is palpable. It's an unforgettable first impression, which is not only true of the scene, but Hungarian director Laszlo Nemes, making his feature debut.

After "processing" the transport, the *sonderkommando* rifle through the victims' clothing for valuables and shovel their cremated ashes. For all intents and purposes, this is the seventh circle of hell.

While clearing the gas chamber of bodies, or "pieces," as the Nazis call them, Saul finds a corpse he claims to be his son. The rest of the film follows Saul, quite literally and closely, as he attempts to give his presumed son a dignified burial in the least dignified place on Earth.

Son of Saul is a difficult watch, and not for the reason you think. Subject matter aside, Saul is a frustrating protagonist. Single-minded in the pursuit of his son's body and a rabbi to say the mourner's *Kaddish*, Saul often acts against his own self-interest and that of his fellow prisoners, much to their annoyance – and the viewer's.

At roll call, another prisoner accuses Saul of having "failed the living for the dead." The line is not only a startling reminder of how aggressive prisoners could be to one another, but a telling characterization of Saul, who, perhaps, sees no distinction. This might explain Saul's risky behaviour and apparent flagrant disregard for his life.



Géza Rohrig as the titular character Saul.

Indicting Saul as "frustrating" might sound like heresy. To be fair, viewers of Holocaust cinema have become so accustomed to seeing Jews cast as victims, we easily forget that some prisoners were active managers of their own fate, however futile their attempts. Saul's struggle unfolds against the planning and execution of the Auschwitz prisoner uprising.

Saul's subjectivity is another source of frustration. The title is a misnomer, as Nemes never firmly establishes the titular child is Saul's. Again, we rely solely on the word of Saul himself, who believes his son was born out of wedlock.

With a constant focus on Saul's face and hypnotizing tracking shots, it's not clear when a scene begins and another ends.

> *Saul is a frustrating protagonist.*

The entire film is a blur. It's a matter of moments and minutes between the solitude of the *sonderkommando's* cavernous dwellings and the woodland inferno where Jews are stripped naked and shot point blank into an amorphous pit.

While many consider *Schindler's List* to represent the essence of Holocaust cinema, *Son of Saul*, which won the Grand Prix at Cannes, sets a new standard for its visceral tour of camp life, that is, death. Spielberg throws in everything and the kitchen sink. Nemes, however, makes a startlingly bold choice to relegate the Holocaust's indelible imagery to the blurry background, following the weary face of Saul in shallow focus. While the close-up has long been associated with intimacy and familiarity, its use has never been so tense and austere. It's no coincidence that Auslander, Saul's surname, is German for "alien."

The Holocaust needs documentary, although I have never doubted a fictional film's potential to elicit a strong emotional effect. Even if its premise is contrived, *Son of Saul* is excruciatingly real.

Son of Saul opens in Toronto on Dec. 25 and in Vancouver and Montreal on Jan. 15. ■

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Cook a pot of winter comfort food

EILEEN GOLTZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

I like to cook stews and soups in the winter months so meals are easy and hearty.

Burgundy beef stew-ish (aka beef bourguignonne)

- ❑ 1 leek
- ❑ 4 stalks parsley
- ❑ 3 sprigs thyme
- ❑ 1 bay leaf
- ❑ 3 lb. beef stew meat (you can cut up a roast in big-ish bite sized pieces
- ❑ 1 large onion diced fine
- ❑ 3 carrots, chopped
- ❑ 2 cloves garlic, chopped fine
- ❑ 1 bottle good red burgundy
- ❑ 6 oz. pastrami, diced
- ❑ salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ❑ 1/3 cup flour
- ❑ 2 cups water
- ❑ 1 lb. small white mushrooms, stems trimmed and caps peeled

Put leek, parsley, thyme, bay leaf, beef, onions, carrots, garlic, in a large bowl and add wine. Mix to combine making sure everything is coated then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours.

Remove the beef from marinade (save the marinade), and pat the beef dry with paper towels. Fry the pastrami in a large pot until crisp, about 5 minutes. Season the beef with salt and pepper. Add the pieces to the pot and sear on all sides (5 to 7 minutes). Sprinkle the flour over the beef and cook, stirring constantly, for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the marinade and water. Mix to combine and bring to a boil over high heat, scraping up the bits from the bottom of the pan. At this point you can pour the whole mixture into a crock pot, put on low cover and cook for 4 to 6 hours or reduce the mixture to a simmer in the pan, cover, and cook 3 to 4 hours. Add mushrooms and cook for 30 minutes more. Before serving remove the bay leaf, leek, parsley and thyme. Serves 4 to 6.

Beef and beer stew

- ❑ 2 1/2 lb. beef, cut into cubes
- ❑ kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ❑ ¼ cup flour
- ❑ 4 tbsp. olive oil
- ❑ 4 slices beef fry chopped
- ❑ 2 tbsp. chopped garlic
- ❑ 3 large onions, thinly sliced
- ❑ 2 cups dark ale or beer
- ❑ 1 cup beef or vegetable broth
- ❑ 2 tbsp. brown sugar
- ❑ 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- ❑ 3 sprigs thyme
- ❑ 3 sprigs parsley
- ❑ 2 sprigs tarragon
- ❑ 1 bay leaf
- ❑ 3 potatoes, cut into quarters

In a bowl combine the beef with the flour and season with salt and pepper. Mix to coat. Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a fry pan and working in batches, sear the outside of the beef pieces. When seared, place them aside on a platter and then cook the beef fry until crispy. Add the remaining oil, garlic, and the onions; cook until golden, about 25 to 30 minutes. Add 1 cup of beer; cook, scraping bottom of pot. Cook for about 5 minutes then add the beef, 1 cup beer, broth, brown sugar, vinegar, thyme, parsley, tarragon, bay leaf, and salt and pepper. Bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer, add the potatoes and cook, covered, until beef is tender approx. 1 ½ to 2 hours.

Root vegetable stew aka Tzimmis

- ❑ 3 to 4 tbsp. olive oil
- ❑ 3 lb. beef stew meat, cut into cubes
- ❑ salt and pepper, to taste
- ❑ 1 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
- ❑ 2 large sweet onions, chopped
- ❑ 4 cups beef broth
- ❑ 4 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes
- ❑ 4 oz. pitted prunes, halved
- ❑ 4 oz. dried apricots
- ❑ 2 carrots, peeled and cut into pieces
- ❑ 1 tbsp. honey

In batches, in a skillet heat the oil and sear the beef. Place the cooked meat in a crock pot. Season with salt and pepper. Add the cinnamon, nutmeg, and onions stirring to combine. Add the broth, potatoes, prunes, apricots and carrots. Mix to combine. Cover and cook on low for 6 hours or high for 4, uncovered, until tender, about 1 hour. Just before serving stir in the honey. Serves 6

Chicken stew

- ❑ 1 cup sliced celery
- ❑ 3/4 cup diced carrot
- ❑ 1/2 cup chopped onion
- ❑ 2 tsp. minced garlic
- ❑ 2 tbsp. olive oil
- ❑ 4 cups chicken broth
- ❑ 3 cups bottled marinara sauce
- ❑ 1 cup canned garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- ❑ 3/4 cup uncooked macaroni noodles (you can use your own favourite)
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- ❑ 1 lb. skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into 1/2-in. pieces

In an oven proof Dutch oven sauté the celery, carrot, and onion in the oil. Stirring constantly so it doesn't burn, cook until the vegetables are tender. Add the garlic, cook for 1 minute then add the broth, marinara, garbanzo beans, noodles and pepper. Bring the mixture to a boil and cook for 3 minutes. Reduce to a simmer and add the chicken. Mix to combine and cook 4 to 5 minutes until the chicken is cooked. Serves 4 to 6 depending on the size of the serving. ■

ASK ELLA

It's not easy being a Jew at Christmas or quitting smoking

Ella Burakowski
eb@thecjn.ca

Dear Ella,

I'm bombarded with Christmas. Walking through a mall with all the Christmas decorations, walking the dog past the houses with Christmas lights, surfing the radio for a normal song or the TV for a movie without a Christmas theme, and even buying a cup of coffee in a generic cup, I am in Christmas sensory overload!

People are also in great moods. So why am I so sad? As a Jew, I can't help feeling left out. I want to join in, too, but feel like my parents are admonishing me from their graves. I like the spirit of the holiday, not the religious aspect. It is a warm holiday at a very cold time of year. The point is, I feel guilty even thinking this way. I can't be the only one feeling excluded, can I?

Feeling Left Out

Dear Feeling Left Out

Living in Canada, you will always experience this all-encompassing holiday season. It's the most lucrative time of year for businesses, so it's very aggressively marketed.

The results are exactly as you describe. Everywhere you turn, Christmas is in its full glory. So what are you supposed to do? Nothing. Stop feeling guilty. There is nothing wrong with enjoying a beautifully decorated house. It's pretty. The shows on TV are usually good and heartfelt, often with a family theme or a message. As for the tunes, they're often toe-tappingly catchy. Unless you hibernate in your home without outside stimulus, you cannot avoid this season. Enjoying pretty lights doesn't make you a bad Jew.

Jews everywhere experience the same feelings. Even Kyle from *South Park* has a song called *A Jew at Christmas*. Chanukah usually falls around the same time of year, and we have the same feelings of gift giving and family spirit through our very own holiday. Lighting candles, family get-togethers, community programs, parties, latkes and gifts will satisfy this warm spirit you are missing. Don't fight your way through this season. Live through it, enjoy the spirit of the season, and stop feeling guilty.

Dear Ella,

I'm a hard-core smoker and have been for 35 years. I've tried to quit many times, but I barely make it through one day.

Logically I know the horrifying data. Our government has made it extremely inconvenient and expensive for me to smoke, and my kids are angry with me for being so selfish. The icing on the cake? My dear friend Barb just passed away. She had lung cancer and was a smoker, like me. I was physically sick and an emotional wreck dealing with the guilt of "I may be next." So how do I handle this? I have a cigarette! If this wasn't the kick in the pants I needed, how am I ever going to get out of this?

Addicted

Dear Addicted

Smoking is a complex habit. It is so much more than a physical addiction. There is a strong emotional component. It is therapy for some, as well as an association with daily routines and a nicotine dependence. A smoking addiction has tentacles that hold on tight to your body and your mind.

Sure, there may be all kinds of help out there, and your friends and family will jump for joy and support you, but the buck stops with you. You are the one who has to walk the walk and not have a cigarette after a meal, or after a phone call, or with a coffee. You need to get through this tough part and be prepared to put in the work – and make no mistake, it is work.

On the bright side, there is help and support available. Most smokers desperately want to be rid of this dangerous habit and the hold it has on them.

This is your decision alone. Once you make it, you don't have to go it alone. Tell people. It will make it more real and force you to be accountable. Get help from your doctor, and seek out reading material, online support groups and patches. Whatever it takes, you will never regret your decision. ■

Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

Mazel Tov!

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We wish Hyman Schwartz good health and happiness on his 100th birthday, Dec. 25. From his family and friends, and neighbours at the Bronfman House.

Mazel tov to Ruth & Alex Wolkowicz on their 60th wedding anniversary. From your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Happy 55th anniversary to Peter & Arlette Schulman! Married Dec. 8, 1960. Two people who exemplify the meaning of commitment. With love from the kids.

Ingrid & Robert Gurman, Lauren & Ricky Victor announce the engagement of Karen & Scott. Grandparents, Sheila Gurman, Charles & Dorothy Kon, Harriet (Babs) Victor.

Mazel tov to Joseph & Gloria Gilbert on their 50th anniversary! Love always to Mom & Dad / Bubby & Zaidie from their children and grandchildren.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

The Socialite

By Tara Fainstein

Larry Zeifman, Rabbi Steven Weil, Rabbi Micah Greenland, Allen Fagin, Eddy Goldstein, Rabbi Glenn Black, Jerry Klasner, Jack & Harriet Feintuch, Karmela Klasner, Felicia Salomon, Sonya Budd

Julie and Yaakov Kaplan, Jack and Harriet Feintuch

Elliott Kirshenbaum and Adam Klasner

NCSY and Torah High Gala

The Spirit of Youth was celebrated in fine style at NCSY and Torah High's first Celebrating the Spirit of Youth Gala. The evening's honorees were Jack & Harriet Feintuch, Jerry & Karmela Klasner and Eddy Goldstein & Felicia Salomon. Guests' tastebuds were awakened by chef Katsuji Tanabi of L.A. Mexikosher, while their intellects were inspired by the guest speaker, leading social entrepreneur and businessman Charlie Harary. Funds raised support NCSY, inspiring Jewish teens through informal Jewish education, and Torah High, allowing students to explore their Jewish identity in the classroom and beyond. ■ – *The Socialite*

David Don, Adam Klasner, Atta and Henry Zieleniec, Sara Icyk, Jerry, Karmela, Michael and Danny Klasner

David and Rita Khazanski, Inna and Edward Kholodenko

Amy and Tommy Stopnicki

Eddy Goldstein and Jack Eisenberger

Danny Klasner and chef Katsuji Tanabe

KATAN STUDIOS PHOTOS | EMAIL THESOCIALITE@THECJN.CA FOR SUBMISSION DETAILS

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What's New

DEC. 24 - JAN. 7

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Dec. 24

MOVIE AND DINNER
Shaar Shalom Synagogue hosts a night of movies and Chinese food, 7:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.

MYTH OF THE RESURRECTION
Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "The myth of the resurrection," 8 p.m., Shaarei Tefillah Congregation. RSVP toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca

DANI BOARDWALK CAFE
Enjoy kosher food and play board games at the DANI Cafe, 7-10 p.m., 501 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill. $5.

Friday, Dec. 25

LEAVING ISRAEL
Rabbi Jonathan Ziring discusses "May one leave Israel in a time of war?" Yeshivat Or Chaim. *Shacharit* at 8:30 a.m.; Shiur at 10:30 a.m. Free. Register at www.torontotorah.com/yk

Monday, Jan. 4

BE A LIMMUD PRESENTER
Open call for presenters for Limmud Toronto 2016, an innovative, inclusive festival of Jewish learning. Deadline for presenter applications is Jan. 4. Visit limmud.ca to apply. Limmud Toronto 2016 will be held March 6.

Thursday, Jan. 7

YIDDISH VINKL
Larry Anklewicz discusses "The evolution of Jewish films," noon, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $20, includes lunch. RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Baycrest is looking for volunteers who have special interests or talents to share with clients. Russian-speaking volunteers also needed. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572, or email volunteer@baycrest.org

Deadline reminders: *There will be no issue Dec. 31. The deadline for the issue of Jan. 14 is Jan 4. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email* **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Kicking up their heels

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and Mario Sergio, minister responsible for seniors affairs, danced the horah with residents of the Terraces of Baycrest at their Chanukah party earlier this month.

Circle of Care and Jewish Hospice Programs is looking for volunteers to provide visits and support to individuals with a life-threatening illness and their families. A 30-hour training course is provided, starting Feb. 8. Contact **Arnold Foss**, 416-635-2900, ext. 496, or afoss@circleofcare.com

HEBREW CLASSES
Pride of Israel Synagogue offers conversational ulpan Hebrew with **Yael Lev** for beginners (must read Hebrew), intermediate and advanced levels. Daytime and evening classes. New session begins the week of Jan. 5. Call 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

Temple Sinai offers beginners Hebrew class, Jan. 5-March 8, 7:30 p.m. and intermediate Hebrew, Jan. 7-March 17, 7:30 p.m. To register, call 416-487-4161.

YIDDISH CLASS
All levels of Yiddish classes are offered Sundays 10 a.m. to noon, Beth David Synagogue. $150/10 sessions. Starts Jan. 10. 416-635-2883, ext. 5189, or www.committeeforYiddish.com

MEDICAL ETHICS
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "Cosmetic surgery: when is it justified?" Jan. 11, 8 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Email info@torontotorah.com

HOW TO PRAY FOR THE ILL
Ora Ziring discusses "What do we pray for when we pray for the sick?" Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m., at Yeshivat Or Chaim. Email info@torontotorah.com

MACCABI SPORTS
Maccabi community sports offers basketball programs for children aged 9-12 and volleyball for youths aged 10-15, starting in January. Visit www.maccabicanada.com

JF&CS

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call Beth Feffer, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

› **Adult 55+ Culture, Miles Nadal JCC.** Comedian **Jack Newman** looks at the history of Jewish comedians, Jan. 14 and Jan. 21. Doors open at 1 p.m., program starts at 1:30 p.m.

Swing dance classes with **Kris Light** of Bees Knees Dance Studio. No partners or experience needed. Offered Tuesdays, Jan. 19-March 8. Dance lesson at 11 a.m.; social dance at noon.416-924-6211, ext. 155 .

Play board games in a friendly atmosphere, Jan. 21, 11 a.m.

› **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Dec. 29, **David Chandross** discusses "History of fashion and contemporary esthetics," 10 a.m.; Jan. 5, **Harvey Skolnick** discusses "If you ever find yourself saying: I didn't know that," 10 a.m.; Jan. 7, wellness lecture on "Your eyes, your health," 1:30 p.m.; Jan. 10, concert with **Helen** and **Peter Ness.**
› **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Join the club for 2016. Social bridge, Thursdays, noon.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

› **National Council of Jewish Women – Aviva Chapter** is looking for senior women who would like to join, 416-633-5100.
› **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860.
› **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. 416-256-1892.
› **Adath Israel Congregation**. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. **Judi** 416-785-0941.
› **Shaar Shalom Synagogue**. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
› **Beth Emeth Synagogue**. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.
› **Temple Har Zion**. Mah-jong at 1 p.m.; Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com
› **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge, mah-jong and canasta, Thursdays, 1:30-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
› **Beth Sholom Synagogue**. Creative exercise, lunch and cards, Wednesdays at noon. 416-783-6103.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.
› Clay for kids ages 3-5 is offered Thursdays, Jan. 14-March 2, 4:30 p.m.
› **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Mix it up with media," Thursdays, Jan. 7-March 31, 1 p.m.
› Film appreciation program, "As time goes by," Wednesdays, Jan. 6-27, 1 p.m.
› Yiddish conversation, Mondays, Jan. 11-March 14, 1:30 p.m.
› Beginner mah-jong, Wednesdays, Jan. 13-Feb. 17, 10:30 a.m.
› Bridge level 1, Thursdays, Jan. 21-March 10, 10 a.m.
› JCC players after school musical theatre program runs Jan. 6-March 9, 6:30 p.m.
› Acrylic painting with **Leon Soriano** runs Jan. 5-March 8, 9:45 a.m. or 1 p.m.
› Krav Maga for adults: self-defence used by the Israel Defence Forces, Dec. 23, 30 and Jan. 6. A new session begins Jan. 13. Ext. 4120.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org
› Register for winter programs. Some programs start Jan. 4.
› Subscribe now to the Toronto Jewish Film Society's 38th season, ext. 139.
› Register for pottery winter classes. Youth pottery, Wednesdays 4 p.m., Jan. 6-March 2; Adult pottery daytime, Tuesdays 9:30 a.m., Jan. 5-March 8; adult pottery evening, Wednesdays, 7 p.m., Jan. 6-March 9. Pottery co-op space available.
› It's a parent: Hebrew program for parents of babies under a year to discuss parenting, Mondays Jan. 4-Feb. 1, 10:30 a.m.
› Tuned-in parenting: Hebrew language workshop on parenting, Wednesdays Jan. 6-Feb. 3, 8 p.m. Email lizar@mnjcc.org
› Register now for winter Shabbat family party, Fridays mornings, Jan. 8-March 11. Email anniem@mnjcc.org
› Register now for PJ Plus (children 18 months-3 years with an adult), Thursdays Jan. 14-March 31, 10 a.m. 905-303-2353, ext. 3258.
› **Kevin Courrier** presents a 5-week lecture on "Jewish sensibility in Hollywood films," Mondays, Jan. 11-Feb. 8, 1:30 p.m.
› Everybody dance with DJ **Layah Jane** – all ages, all bodies welcome. Jan. 17, 2:30 p.m.
› From tummies to mummies: prenatal aquafit, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:30- 8 p.m. Ext. 567.
› Open community choir, Mondays at 7:30 p.m. with **Gillian Stecyk**. No experience or audition required. Email music@mnjcc.org
› Everyday Friends: social programs for people age 15-29 with developmental disabilities, first Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. Ext. 330.
› Choral workshop for opera lovers with **Alvaro Lozano Gutierrez**, Feb. 24-April 12 at 1 p.m. or Feb. 25-April 14, 7:30 p.m.
› *Cause for Celebration*, illustrations by **Yaara Eshet**, is on display at the gallery until Jan.3.
› Klezmer ensemble, Tuesdays, ongoing 7:30 p.m. with **Eric Stein.** music@mnjcc.org
› Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. For programs, ext. 3025.
› A glass fusion workshop to make a pedestal stand for cakes will be offered Jan. 12 at 7 p.m.
› JStixx Baby will be offered Wednesdays, Jan. 6-March 9, 9:30 a.m.
› Kids ballroom dancing will be offered Mondays, Jan. 4-March 7, 6 p.m.
› Acro will be offered Wednesdays, Jan. 6-March 9, 5 p.m.
› Daytime and evening ceramics courses offered for all abilities. Classes start Jan. 6, noon or 7 p.m.
› J Singles klezmer concert, Jan. 16.
› Beginner mah-jong Tuesdays, Jan. 12-Feb. 16, 10:30 a.m.
› Bridge starts Tuesdays, Jan. 26-March 29, 10 a.m. ■

SeeJN | Kotel bar mitzvah

Thanks to an initiative by Toronto Jewish community leader Max Benaim, 70 underprivileged children from the Israeli cities of Jerusalem, Haifa, Or Yehuda, Ashkelon and Kiryat Arbah celebrated their bar and bat mitzvahs at the Kotel this past fall. The funds were raised through the Estrella Benaim, Z'L' Foundation, and joined by a delegation of 50 Canadians, each child was symbolically twinned with a fallen hero from the Gaza War in 2014. The children and their parents arrived at the Kotel to collect their personalized tfillin, tallitot, and siddurim, and were treated to a reception at a banquet hall in Jerusalem.

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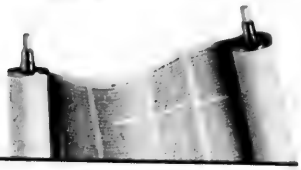
Parshah

Vayechi | Genesis 47:28-50:26



Rabbi Ilan Acoca says unity means respecting other opinions, even if we might disagree with them
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl explains the importance of *Viddui*, the deathbed affirmation of faith
Rabbi Catharine Clark suggests that we heal our relationships right now, while we still have time

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

This week's parshah describes the end of Jacob's life. The verse says: "Jacob lived in the land of Egypt 17 years." (Bereshit 47:28) The Talmud (Taanit 5b) teaches in the name of Rabbi Yochanan that Jacob did not die, because as long as his seed is alive, he is considered to be alive.

In order to understand this teaching, let me quote another piece of Talmud. Berachot 18a says that the righteous people are considered alive even when they are dead.

What this means is that as long as we continue propagating the teachings of the righteous people, they are considered to be alive. As long as Jacob's descendants walk in the footsteps of their ancestor, his spirit continues to live.

Much has been written about the importance of Jewish education, but for me, such teaching is a boost for continuing with my foremost priority, which is proliferating Sephardi education.

In a recent exchange with one of my Ashkenazi colleagues, he dismissed a certain Sephardi custom that I posted. I wrote him an email with all the sources, and he finally accepted the fact that Sephardim have a different custom.

This incident triggered mixed feelings. On the one hand, I was happy to educate, but on the other, I was sad about how quick we are to dismiss information without further questioning it before doing so.

People often ask me why am I so passionate about teaching others about Sephardi Judaism. The answer I give is that I owe this to my ancestors. If my Sephardi colleagues and I don't do this, we will be dismissing the Sephardi *chachamim*, sages, of every generation.

As Jews, we have to promote unity. Unity does not mean conforming to the majority but rather respecting each other's opinion even though it is not the same as ours.

May HaShem give us the wisdom, understanding and knowledge to respect each other's differences. Amen! ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

Although the Torah portion Vayechi begins by mentioning the life of our forefather Jacob, it actually details the loving loyalty (*chesed ve'emet*) of family at the time of death. We witness, through the lens of Torah and time, the passing from this world of Jacob and Joseph (and in the prophetic Haftorah reading, the last hours of King David).

The Talmud teaches that, "If one falls sick and life is endangered, the person is instructed to offer confession, for all who are sentenced to death make confession." The tradition of a deathbed affirmation of faith, *Viddui*, may have developed as a personal ritual paralleling the martyrdom of Rabbi Akiva, who went to his death proclaiming the singularity of the One God. Elements of the final *Viddui* are incorporated into the concluding moments of *Neilah* on Yom Kippur.

Phillipe Aries, in his magisterial study, *The Hour of Our Death*, explored changing attitudes toward death in western culture. In the Middle Ages, the focus on "dying well" grew in importance as a way to gain some control over, and come to terms with, personal mortality. During Renaissance times, the acknowledgment of personal failings (sin) and profession of faith became a public ritual. In the modern world, the medical-biological emphasis on preserving life dominates over the psychological, spiritual and metaphysical preparation for death.

Increased interest in hospice care may restore some attention to how the dying face death. *Being Mortal*, the recent book by Atul Gawande, suggests that five questions should guide this process: What is your understanding of where you are and of your illness? What are your fears or worries for the future? What are your goals and priorities at this point in your life? What outcomes are unacceptable to you? What are you willing to sacrifice and not? And later: what would a good day look like?

Certainly, the loving loyalty (*chesed ve'emet*) of family and friends remains as important now as it did in the Torah portion. ■

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto.

Rabbi Catharine Clark

In this week's parshah, Joseph is told, "Behold! Your father is ill." "Behold" is an odd touch, considering that Jacob is more than 100 years old. It can hardly be surprising that he is not in perfect health.

A midrash explains that his illness is indeed news. Jacob is the first person to be sick. Before him, people simply aged and then died suddenly. They would look older, but not feel or function any differently than they had in the prime of life. Jacob institutes a new situation, praying that God will grant him disease.

Such a prayer seems incomprehensible to many of us who struggle daily with health problems. What we would not give to live with the physical well-being of a 25-year-old until our very last breath in old age! Why would Jacob seek such a curse as illness?

The midrash answers this question, too.

Jacob understands that he has affairs to set in order before his death. He was a spectacular failure as a father, playing favourites and sending his sons on literal guilt trips to Egypt during the famine in his homeland. Jacob most certainly does need to repair some relationships before his death. In fact, much of Parshat Vayechi is Jacob's attempt to accomplish this task. He gathers his sons together and blesses each of them in turn.

It is sad, though, that Jacob needed illness to put him on his deathbed before he would try to correct his many parenting mistakes. His example is a cautionary tale for us, teaching us that we should heal our relationships now, without waiting for health problems to become so bad that we know there is no time left for delay. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is the spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom, a Conservative synagogue in London, Ont.

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YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

A poster advertises the new *Star Wars* movie, *The Force Awakens,* at the Yes Planet cinema in Jerusalem, on Dec. 17. Because movies open in the Jewish state on Thursdays, not Fridays which is the norm around the world, Israelis were among the first to watch the movie last week.

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Mayim Bialik: Supporting Israel and speaking Yiddish

DANIEL KOREN
ONLINE EDITOR

On Dec. 12, Mayim Bialik turned 40. A prolific writer, actor, neuroscientist, attachment parenting advocate and proud proponent of modern Orthodoxy, Bialik – like her great-grandfather's first cousin, Israeli national poet Chaim Nachman Bialik – she has accomplished a fair bit in a short time.

Most of you know her as Dr. Amy Farrah Fowler, her character on TV's popular *The Big Bang Theory*, or as the title character on the '90s sitcom *Blossom*.

But Bialik is also known for her lengthy statements on Judaism's role in contemporary society, her musings on attachment parenting and homeschooling, and her unwavering support for Israel.

As a contributor to the website *Kveller*, Bialik has shared her thoughts on poignant events such as the loss of her father, the Jewish connection to her vegan lifestyle, what Jewish women need to know about breast cancer, and the Hebrew prayer that brought her and her son closer together.

As the founder of *GrokNation*, she's been able to take her influence a step further, commenting on the recent statement by the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) against female rabbis, the Syrian refugee crisis, last month's Paris attacks, and other issues.

The CJN asked Bialik, who was recently in Montreal to film an episode of *YidLife Crisis* with Jamie Elman and Eli Batalion, about her thoughts on the RCA ruling, her grasp of the Yiddish language, and if an anti-Israel bias does indeed exist in the media.

So you recently tweeted to radio host Howard Stern to discuss your shared "unfashionable" views on Israel. Has he responded?
No, not that I've seen. I'm not constantly on Twitter. I actually haven't been on Twitter in a while. That came up on my news feed, and I figured why not. I was possibly taking a trip to New York, so I know that my publicist suggested to reach out to his people so it wasn't totally out of the blue.

Why do you use the word "unfashionable"? Do you think there is an anti-Israel bias in the media?
Obviously Howard was speaking about [calling out Pink Floyd frontman Roger Waters for urging rocker Bon Jovi not to perform in Israel]. When I was on Howard's show, we talked about it a bit. I mean, I've been very public about my support for a peace process and my support for people not calling for the destruction of the Jewish People, simply because I believe that Israel should exist, so I've seen a lot of that on my social media for sure.

And Roger Waters? Would you call him an anti-Semite?
I am not going to speak more about Roger Waters. I don't want to name-call. What's going on with Roger Waters and Howard Stern is what's playing out on the campus I went to university at in the '90s, UCLA, and it's playing itself out on every major campus pretty much all over the world.

How can we educate people like that on campus?
[Laughs] Israel needs a better publicist. I don't know.

You recently wrote a piece on *GrokNation* about your reaction to the RCA's ruling on female rabbis. Do you think there will ever be a time where female rabbis will be accepted within the Orthodox community?
Absolutely.

What can we do to get there?
I think we're doing it. There's a lot to be said for slow change, and Judaism is big on slow change. There have been a lot of things, literally, for the past at least 2,000, or 3,000 years of Jewish history, that were 'This is never going to happen' and then did. This is not a halachic challenge, it's a *minhagim* one. This is more about custom, history and culture than it is about legality, and for all of the people who don't believe that, you know, they can ask a different rabbi. It's actually not a halachic issue.

I'm not big on talking about the halachic changes I think need to happen to Judaism. I'm just an actress who happens to be Jewish. Because this is not a halachic issue, because we're dealing, again, more with bias and stereotyping, I think we're going to look back in 50 or 100 years and not even think twice. And you can say that for every great civil rights progress that's been made in the world and in the western world over the past 100 years.

How has the transition been moving from *Kveller* to *GrokNation*?
It's been good. I still write for *Kveller*, and I'm still part of the *Kveller* family, but I've found that I can have a broader reach and do more specific and targeted work at *GrokNation*, so I've been able to speak on a broader range of topics. We've also started doing videos, and we're thinking of starting more formal video and lecture-type conversations and things like that, so it's a different kind of format.

Mayim Bialik

I understand you were recently in Montreal to film an episode of *YidLife Crisis* and you've been to Toronto a couple of times, too. Do you see a difference between the Jewish community here and the one in Los Angeles and the United States?
You know, besides what I deem is the accent of Canadian Jews [laughs], there's honestly not a lot of difference. There's an east-coast flair to Toronto, just like there is an east-coast flair to the United States. Jews in Vegas are different from Jews in New York, but in a lot of ways, they're not, and so my experience with the Canadian Jewish community has been, really, a wonderful extension of the work that I do in this country with the Jewish community.

The stories are different. That's fascinating to me, to hear some of the stories. Obviously, when I worked with Eli and Jamie on their *YidLife Crisis* episode, I had never met French-speaking Jews who weren't in Paris. It's also really neat to hear the stories of eastern European Jews, because a lot of Canadian Jews are eastern European, but how different the trajectory was for them. My grandparents came to Ellis Island and worked in sweatshops and lived in the very poorest parts of the Bronx, and the stories of Canadian Jews are often very different, so it's really fascinating.

How was doing the episode of *YidLife Crisis* with Eli and Jamie?
They're really great guys. We met for the first time in Montreal. My editorial director, Esther Kustanowitz, who is a writer and social media presence, connected me with them. We emailed a bit and just filmed the episode a few weeks ago.

And you speak fluent Yiddish, right?
I was raised speaking Yiddish and I raised my children speaking Yiddish, and I took Yiddish in college. I wasn't raised with full proper grammar, but with a very large vocabulary, which was part of normal speech, meaning we didn't just whip it out when we needed to. It was part of our speech, and that's still kind of how I speak now.

When I speak to other Jewish people I try and tone it down when they don't speak Yiddish [laughs]. But I have a very large vocabulary, and my children have a sizeable vocabulary. I learned proper grammar in college, but I haven't spoken full Yiddish probably since I was a very, very young child or in college. So yeah, this was very different. I have enough of an understanding of the grammar to have been able to roughly make sense of the script, but it definitely took a little massaging.

So it wasn't hard to keep up with them?
Eli speaks a more refined and proper Yiddish, and Jamie and I were following along, but obviously they have more experience speaking fluently with it, which I have not done in quite some time. I speak short sentences with my children, and when I was in college, I was taking Yiddish and reading and watching Yiddish movies and things like that for class, but they are far more experienced speakers. I can catch some grammar things, but it was mainly me learning it and having it come out of my mouth at least relatively correctly.

Sounds like a fun experience.
It was. It was really fun.

Do you feel as someone who is vocal about supporting Israel that you've educated those around you, including your co-stars on the *Big Bang Theory*?
Well, three out of seven of us are Jewish [laughs], and if you extend out, four of the eight of us in our extended cast are Jewish. I don't talk about it a lot with our cast per se, but I think what's important about speaking out is that I don't even think of it as "speaking out." I don't think you should be ashamed to talk about your support for a country where Jews can have an autonomous existence. It's become such a dirty word to say the word "Israel," and that's really a shame, because although there are very, very difficult politics surrounding Israel, and I don't agree with everything the Israeli government or the people in the State of Israel do, it's not a dirty word to talk about a country amidst dozens of Arab countries in that region of the world. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Searching for Canadian ethical wills

Backstory

LESLEY SIMPSON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When the Yiddish writer Sholom Aleichem died in 1916, his family discovered that he had created more than comedy. The writer, whose real name was Solomon Rabinowitz, had also penned what is known as an ethical will, part of a long-standing Jewish tradition, but not a well known one.

An ethical will can be thought of as a personal letter of wishes, written most often from parents to children. Unlike legal wills, these letters are not legally binding. The writer Emil Greenberg characterized ethical wills as being more about precept than property. Ultimately, ethical wills are not about material assets but about moral legacy.

Rabinowitz provided his family with a choice: they could recite the memorial prayer for the dead, the *Kaddish*, or they could gather each year on the anniversary of his death and read some of his most "merry" stories in a language understood by the listeners. His legacy would be illuminated in the laughter of his descendants. His family has subsequently organized a reading each year since his death, reading these comical stories for family and friends in English and Yiddish.

Rabbi Jack Riemer and Prof. Nathaniel Stampfer, co-authors of *So That Your Values Live On: Ethical Wills and How to Prepare Them* (Jewish Lights Publishing, 2010), collected examples of ethical wills – from traditional rabbinic wills to wills from the Holocaust, as well as wills from the State of Israel and contemporary examples. The ethical wills of public figures, including Theodor Herzl, Hannah Senesh and Edmond James de Rothschild, as well as those of ordinary folks, are gathered in the book.

To be clear, writing an ethical will is not necessarily an exercise for the elderly. Eldad Pan wrote a letter to his mother before he was killed in Israel's War of Independence in 1948. He was 20 years old. Other people write ethical wills when faced with life-changing events, ranging from the birth of a child, to diagnosis of a terminal illness, a coming war, a move to another country and many other circumstances.

> *Ethical wills are not about material assets but about moral legacy.*

To put the tradition in a wider context, the ethical will repertoire includes letters, single author books, such as Sharon Strassfeld's *Everything I Know: Basic Life Rules from a Jewish Mother* (New York: Scribner, 1998), as well as documentary films such as *Hiding and Seeking: Faith and Tolerance After the Holocaust (2004)*.

Sometimes the trajectory of time is reversed, as in Katya Krausova and Yuri Dojc's documentary *Last Folio*, a film by about vanished Jewish life in Slovakia inspired by parents who are no longer alive but whose presence is palpable.

Some thinkers find precedent for the tradition of ethical wills in the biblical stories of Jacob's blessings (Genesis, 49) or Moses' address to the Israelites (Deuteronomy, 4), to name but two examples.

What is missing from the published collections of ethical wills I have read are Canadian voices.

When Riemer and Stampfer searched for material for their collection of ethical wills, they posted a query in the *New York Times* book section. I am issuing an invitation to Canadian Jews from coast to coast as part of my sleuthing to find the voices of Canadians we have not yet heard from. Ethical wills constitute a part of the inner lives of Jews in modernity. Canada is part of that tradition, but is not yet publicly represented in much of the literature. It is my hope to change that with future research.

These letters may be secular or religious, serious or funny, long or short. While a letter on paper is the most common format, an ethical will may also be an audio, a video or a multimedia file. If you have an ethical will in your family, I would be grateful to obtain a copy for future research. I hope to be able to ultimately edit a collection in the form of a book. Inquiries can be sent to jewishethicalwills@gmail.com. ■

Lesley Simpson is a PhD student in Jewish studies at York University in Toronto.

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